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ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL

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Pennell. Whistler, the Friend

A portrait of a kindly and friendly Whistler whom most people never saw, by the wife of the artist, Joseph Pennell. Mrs. Pennell based her study upon a group of letters written by Whistler to the French painter, Fantin-Latour, when they were both young men studying in London and Paris. They reveal the joyous associations of the "society of three"--Whistler, Fantin-Latour, and Alphonse Legros.

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WHISTLER
THE FRIEND

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A portrait of a kindly and friendly Whistler whom most people never saw, by the wife of the artist, Joseph Pennell. Mrs. Pennell based her study upon a group of letters written by Whistler to the French Painter, Fantin-Latour, when they were both young men studying in London and Paris. They reveal the joyous associations of the "society of three"--Whistler, Fantin-Latour, and Alphonse Legros.

By Elizabeth Robins Pennell

Nights: Rome, Venice, London, Paris

By Elizabeth Robins and Joseph Pennell

The Life of James McNeill Whistler

The Whistler Journal

By Joseph Pennell

Pictures of Philadelphia

Pictures of War Work in England

Pictures of the Panama Canal

The Wonder of Work

Pictures of War Work in America

Joseph Pennell's Liberty Loan Poster

Catalogue of the Pennell Memorial Exhibition

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HOMMAGE À DELACROIX. FANTIN-LATOUR
In the Moreau-Nélaton Collection, The Louvre, Paris
By courtesy Les Archives Photographiques d'Art et d'Histoire, Paris

STEPHENS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA, MO.

WHISTLER THE FRIEND

BY

ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL

WITH 20 ILLUSTRATIONS

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Preface

OF THE writing of books about Whistler, there threatens to be no end, and I am adding still one more to their number. But, all the same, I believe I have some claim to originality, and this is my reason. It is about Whistler the Enemy that most of the books have been written, he having set the fashion joyously with his "Gentle Art of Making Enemies." The public saw him always as one well armed for battle, a warrior of a butterfly, darting here, there, and everywhere that long twisting tail with the sting at the end of it, and the venom was not soon or easily forgotten by those who were stung. My good fortune, however, was to know only Whistler the Friend, and I cannot be too thankful for it. In all his relations with Joseph Pennell and myself, this is the one side of his many-sided character that he was charming enough to show us. We knew well enough that he did not come undeservedly by his reputation as Enemy. We had been in London during many

of his most famous battles. We had watched the gaiety and sometimes, it must be confessed, the cruelty of the attack; we had heard the groans and fury of the wounded. To us, luckily, he turned only his friendly face; a fact we more than appreciated, for he could be loyalty itself to all those he cared for, and also the gayest, wittiest, best company in the world, ready with sympathy, abounding in little kindnesses.

I do not think, however, that I fully appreciated his genius for friendship until his early letters to Fantin-Latour fell into my hands. They are letters written when he was young—his enthusiasm for art and for life in its first unspoiled ardour, his faith in his fellow artists unshaken. Of the students he fell in with during his first years in Paris, friendly as he was with them all, there were two he turned to instinctively for the special companionship and sympathy that mean so much to youth on the threshold of life. In the annals of art no more beautiful friendship is recorded than his with

Henri Fantin-Latour and Alphonse Legros—the "Society of Three"—and I hope my small book will emphasize the fact.

Even as I write I hear that in this summer's great Delacroix Exhibition in Paris, Fantin's *Hommage à Delacroix,* enshrined in palms, is placed conspicuously at the entrance. It is only just that it should be. To begin with, a great deal of the history of art in the Nineteenth Century is in it for those who can read aright. It is a helpful reminder of the respect the younger generation of the day, Realists and followers of Courbet though they were, felt for Romanticism that had reached its full splendour and was passing with Delacroix. At that seemingly remote period the artist who identified himself with the new school did not necessarily throw off all appreciation for the old. The canvas also is Fantin's masterpiece; the finest of his large, ambitious compositions. To us now it has the further interest of recalling the relations of three of the famous men—that tri-

angular friendship—who posed for it. The picture was painted before the smallest shadow had fallen over the relations of the "Society of Three"—Whistler, Fantin, Legros—and in it Fantin arranged them in a little group within the group of worshippers at the shrine of one of the great masters of the century. No enemies had yet appeared to be immortalized. The Butterfly with its sting was still fluttering in the far future. The young, serious Whistler, who stands there with his offering of flowers in his hand, is Whistler the Student, Whistler the Friend, not as yet disillusioned by the malice and misunderstanding of his contemporaries—the Whistler who figures in the early letters to Fantin.

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E. R. P.

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I

HOW THE LETTERS CAME TO ME

I

How the Letters Came to Me

HALF the fun of collecting is in picking up the rare prize that turns one's fellow collectors green with envy. I have enjoyed my moments of triumph. My first was as a collector of cook books when—with the help of a catalogue—I found an *Apicius Coelius*, of the right date, in the old vellum covers, and I began to boast of my *incanabula.* I still boast, though my *Apicius* in wartime fell a victim to damp in a London warehouse where it was stored for safe keeping. That story has been told. One that has not been told is of my triumph as a collector of Whistleriana.

It happened after I was left alone to perfect a collection which hitherto had depended chiefly upon Joseph Pennell who, in all such matters, was my mentor and my guide. His flair for that sort of thing was so unfailing that I always felt he

took me into partnership simply as a matter of courtesy. Thanks to him, we shared many triumphs, none more unbelievable than the purchase of, first: the documents, including bills, notes, correspondence and lawyers' briefs in the *Whistler v. Ruskin* case; and second: the entire series of Whistler's letters to David Croal Thomson concerning the 1892 Whistler Exhibition at the Goupil Gallery in London, an event now remembered for having turned the tide in the Master's fame and fortune. "Think," Pennell would say to me in his joy, "think what it will mean in the days to come—just what it would mean to our generation if all the papers concerning Rembrandt's bankruptcy had been preserved, if all the letters, supposing there had been any, recording the sensational progress of Cimabue's Madonna through the streets of Florence had survived!" And in his exultation he never counted the cost, which was not small, of these new treasures, nor, indeed, of any Whistleriana thrown in

our way by chance. I, who kept the purse strings, was the stingy partner, with an unfortunate vision of penniless days to follow each new extravagance. But now he is not here to share or monopolize the responsibility, I plunge, knowing it is what he would have me do. Certainly, I am altogether sure he would approve of my latest addition to the collection and agree with me that it shares the importance of the *Whistler v. Ruskin* documents and the David Croal Thomson series. For, regardless of cost as the spendthrift I have never hitherto been, and amazed that such an opportunity should have fallen to me, I have bought the letters Whistler wrote to Fantin-Latour when both were young, ardent and ambitious, when the Butterfly had not yet developed its sting. I am filled with the wonder of becoming their possessor, though the pride, the delight have gone now I am without my fellow collector to rejoice with me.

We knew about the letters, had known about

them for some few years, had tried our best to obtain possession of them or, at least a glimpse, sure of their use to us as Whistler's biographers. We understood that they were still the property of *Madame* Fantin-Latour and that she intended to leave them to the nation—to the *Luxembourg* perhaps, or the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. This fact, however, was no great comfort as she might outlive us, or the state, as her heir, might be slow in allowing the public a chance to consult them. We hoped perhaps they might be published. We could not question their value for never yet had we read a letter of Whistler's that was not characteristic, as charming and witty as himself. Besides, had we needed proof, long quotations were given by Théodore Duret in his *Whistler* and Léonce Bénédite in articles written for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. In both cases, the passages quoted revealed a serious Whistler, a Whistler absorbed in the problems of paint, an industrious Whistler that few people, the English least of all, suspected,

so much more was always heard of the eccentric Whistler, the *flâneur*, the Idle Apprentice, and it was in the years immediately following his apprenticeship in Paris that the correspondence with Fantin began. We were sure of the seriousness of the letters without reading them—we knew Whistler too well in his later years for doubt. Nor could we question the industry they recorded in face of the pictures painted and the plates etched in his student days. But it is another thing with the gullible public that only by good strong facts can be induced to part with the fiction it has long been fed on.

In 1909 we were preparing a new edition of our *Life of Whistler* when we heard that *Madame* Fantin owned copies as well as the original letters and it seemed just possible that she might let us see them, perhaps lend them to us. Anyhow, there was no harm in trying our luck. As usual during the long period when I played the art critic, I was going to Paris in the spring for

the *Salons* and it was arranged that I should call upon *Madame* Fantin and put my powers of persuasion to the test. As a rule this test fell to Pennell who was a greater master of the art than I. Besides, as Walter Hines Page once wrote him, he had a way of getting what he wanted—"a way that only successful men do have."

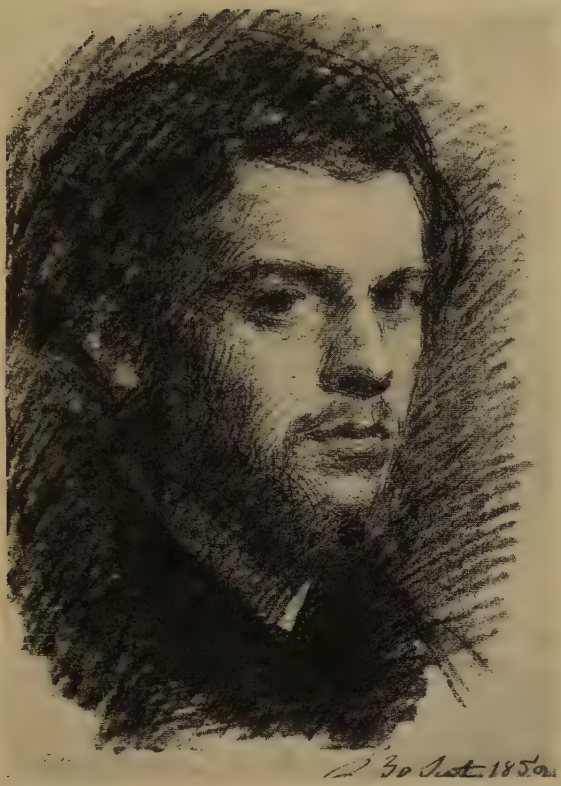
I never shared Browning's longing to be in England when April's there. If I indulged in any special whim of the kind, it was to be in Paris when lilacs bloom and horse chestnuts are in blossom, the season when the beauty and the fragrance and the gaiety of it go just a little to one's head. My yearly visit to the Exhibitions meant hard work it is true, but the exhilaration of Paris in May was worth it, and that year, when my work as art critic was done and I started out one brilliant May morning to exercise my powers of persuasion on *Madame* Fantin-Latour, no such word as Fail remained in my Dictionary.

I went first to the Luxembourg with some ex-

cuse for my visit, which really had no other end than to ask for *Madame* Fantin's address. *Monsieur* Bénédite, then the *Conservateur du Luxembourg*, was absent, but *Monsieur* Moisson, his assistant gave me all the information I asked for and the address into the bargain, and foolishly, or trustingly, I told him why I wanted it. *Madame* Fantin was still living in the *Rue des Beaux-Arts* in the studio Fantin had taken as far back as 1868, where she watched over his pictures, painted her own, guarded his name and fame, with neither thought nor inclination for other cares and pleasures. I hurried there at once. She opened the door, a little old lady in black, with keen, kindly face all aglow when she heard my mission. She drew me into the studio, which, if I remember, opened directly on the sunlit court, and fell at once into talk of the old days and the friendship of the two artists: the artist she had married and the artist whose life I, with my husband, had written. She accepted me without

question because I was the friend of Whistler who was the friend of Fantin. People with a subject in common quickly come to terms. The original letters, treasures for posterity, were on the thinnest of thin paper, she said, now too worn and fragile to bear much handling. For that reason she had made copies and these she would gladly lend me, though of course they must be returned. She would do anything for the memory of Whistler whose friendship Fantin always cherished, even though these two old friends had seen less and less of each other with the passing of the years. But she would like first to look the letters over to satisfy herself that all were there, all in order. I was returning to London the next day, I reminded her. *Bien*, she said, if I came again in the afternoon about four, they would be ready for me.

With the joy of a conqueror I took a cab back to the hotel, and to my collaborator, waiting impatiently in London, I wired to boast that I too could sometimes bring off the big thing. I went



DRAWING OF FANTIN-LATOUR, WHEN A YOUNG MAN, BY HIMSELF
By courtesy of Syndicat de la Propriété Artistique, Paris

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to a good restaurant—no Duval for me on such an eventful day, no cheap lunch and ordinary wine. Only with food and drink as beautiful as the lilacs and horse chestnuts could I worthily celebrate my victory.

At four I was again in the *Rue des Beaux-Arts* and at the door opening on the little court. The smile had gone from *Madame's* face, and she had not to tell me why for in the studio I found Bénédite and a glance at his face warned me that he was there for no good purpose. And indeed he was not. His very politeness was ominous. *Monsieur* Moisson had told him of my visit to the Luxembourg, he began, he was desolated not to have been there to receive me. He had hurried after me but arrived at *Madame's* just too late. However, *Madame* had told him of my proposed return, and here he was to say *un petit bon jour* and to make up for the morning's disappointment.

The correct compliments disposed of, he got

down to business. *Madame* had forgotten, he assured me suavely, that the use of the letters, if not the letters themselves, had long been promised to him and with his right to them he could not allow even Whistler's biographers to interfere. The articles in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* were but the prelude, as it were, to the big work he was preparing in honour of the *cher Maître* he knew so well and for whom his esteem was so great. I tried to argue with him, thanking Heaven that at least my French had not gone back on me as I have known it to do in an emotional crisis. I might as well have argued with a stone. He was inexorable, making it the worse because he was so beautifully polite about it, polite as only a Frenchman can be. His book must not lose its freshness, its bloom, he argued. Should he grant us as much as a glance at the letters he would be forfeiting his prior claim and there was an end to it. Never, in the course of my long life, have I been subjected to so unpleasant an interview.

Madame wilted visibly, did not venture to protest, seemed overwhelmed by Bénédite's eloquence. Her regret was in her eyes, however. When she opened the door to let me out they seemed to tell me more plainly than words that she had not intended to give Bénédite the exclusive rights he claimed, but against his pose of proprietorship she was without the courage to protest.

The disappointment was bitter at the time, and Pennell and I both resented Bénédite's interference the more as the years went on for, to our knowledge, he never wrote, never published another line about Whistler. He may have been too busy in the Luxembourg and at the end too ill but, whatever the reason, the fact remains that he held fast to his claim, never allowed us to see the letters, though he knew as well as we did that *Madame* Fantin so far from sharing his objections, was not merely willing but eager to place them at our disposal. We could not have

published them, copyright laws being what they are, a fact of which Bénédite must have been aware. But if he could not use them, no one else should, seemed to be his dog-in-the-manger attitude which, to this day in looking back, I must confess, continues to enrage me. I knew the name for him when, shortly before his death, we met again in Philadelphia and I saw his arm go round Joseph Pennell's shoulders in an effusive greeting.

We gave up hope of the letters. We resigned ourselves as best we could though it was not easy after they, or the copies, had been so nearly in our grasp. When we heard of *Madame* Fantin's death some few years ago, we supposed the originals had gone to the *Luxembourg*—a pity we thought. They would be lost in Paris where there is little of Whistler's save the portrait of the Mother in the *Louvre*, the prints in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and the *Petit Palais*. The Freer Collection is in Washington and, thanks to us, the greatest collection of Whistleriana is also there,

in the Library of Congress, where without question the letters to Fantin should be, another rare treasure among the many already installed and honoured.

And then the unexpected happened, as it does sometimes. They sometimes have their reward who only stand and wait. Like a bolt from the blue, the news came to us, Mr. Albert Rosenthal its bearer, that the letters had not gone to the *Luxembourg* or any other Gallery, Library or Institution in Paris or anywhere else. They were in the hands of *Madame* Fantin's executors and those executors were not averse to selling them, rather were more than willing provided a place worthy of so important a collection could be assured. Mr. Rosenthal is an artist and understands. To the M. M. Tempelaer, the executors, who are his friends, he explained the importance of the Whistleriana in the Library of Congress, explained further that, as we had presented this collection to the nation and were adding to it, no safer hands

than ours could be found into which to entrust the Whistler-Fantin letters. All this involved a certain amount of correspondence. So important a transaction is not completed in a day. The executors had presented copies of the letters, beautifully written, beautifully bound, to Mr. Rosenthal and this volume he proposed to show us so that we might realise the value of the letters before deciding upon their purchase.

When the volume came I was alone to welcome it, to read, to decide. The long partnership was at an end. Never again could I have the old joy of talking the thing over with Joseph Pennell; of consulting our Bank Account with him and wondering whether it would run to the extravagance of adding the new treasure to our Whistleriana; of agreeing fearfully that the new treasure was worth the risk, that the collection must be perfected even if it led to ruin. Alone I had to work out the problem which my partner for years had solved with such swift and in-

spired decision. But because I was alone, I could not hesitate. Here was one of the most important series of Whistler letters to come within our reach. Joseph Pennell, frugal in everything that concerned himself personally, shrank from no extravagance in honour of the man he loved, the artist whose praise he never ceased to sing. I bought the letters.

They are twenty-eight in number. They vary in length from mere notes to many pages and Whistler's small writing is smaller and "daintier" than in the letters of his later years, the lines closer together as if, when postage was not so insignificant an item of expense as it is to-day, he shared the prevailing economy in letter paper—though economy in his early as in his later days was never his strong point. The paper is thin and fragile, the kind then used for foreign correspondence, so fragile I am almost afraid to touch it. Here and there are little sketches, notes of pictures he was painting, submitted to Fantin for

approval or criticism as the case might be. His plans and schemes are explained at great length; his hopes and fears, his ambitions, his agonies, his joys, his disappointments, his successes are confided to the friend upon whose sympathy and wise counsel he could count. In this early correspondence—or his side of it—one sees Whistler as yet unembittered by the ill-nature of his contemporaries: Whistler in search, not of enemies, but of friends and to the friends, when found, generous and devoted to a fault. London of the Seventies, the Eighties and the Nineties would have cried out "Impossible," would have laughed to scorn the mere suggestion of Whistler as a friend. But the truth is few men's talent for friendship was ever greater and, certainly, Fantin never found a truer friend than Whistler. Too much has been written of Whistler the Enemy. It is high time that something should be heard of Whistler the Friend, and in these letters to Fantin his amazing genius for friendship is revealed.

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II

THE SOCIETY OF THREE

II

The Society of Three

THE art students of to-day look upon revolt as their monopoly, convinced that convention was never defied before. But, as I read my history, the rebellion in Art has never ceased since there have been artists in the world. Courbet, Manet, Cézanne, Matisse waved the Banner of Freedom no more valiantly than Giotto when he deserted his flock to free Church and Altar from Byzantine clutches. In certain periods the Crusaders may have lingered longer on their conquered heights, may have been too strong for any new rebellion. Throughout these intervals, however, youth's dissatisfaction with things as they are only slumbered. With the first chance they were again shouting their call to arms and the new Crusade was in full swing.

To the emancipated youth of the Nineteen-

Thirties, the Eighteen-Fifties seem a deplorable decade, the fashions in art as commonplace and dowdy as the fashions in dress, and artists well content to have them so. And yet in few decades have the schools and studios been so seething with revolution, so valiantly armed for battle. David, with his classicism, may have been dismissed by intolerant students as a back number, but the most conceited could not quite rid themselves of a sneaking respect for his probity in art, his unimpeachable drawing, his learned technique; qualities nowadays outmoded. Nor could they deny that something—much—might be said for Delacroix and Romanticism as he interpreted it. All the same, the sympathies of the most advanced went to Courbet, Prophet of Realism, Courbet, fearless if perhaps a trifle self-conscious in his defiance, a trifle too sure that nobody ever knew anything about art before him. His was the name that thundered through the studios even as the names of Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh thun-

dered in their turn and continue to thunder today. It was he who gave the battle cry, he who led the attack when Realism grappled with Romanticism in the new form of that duel which has been fought since artists first foregathered and will continue to be fought until the last trumpet calls to judgment. Preposterous as it may seem to our Modernists, the Realists were the Independents of their day, just as the Impressionists were of theirs, and the Post-Impressionists of theirs, and so on with every succeeding group who believed themselves the sole champions of truth and honesty in art, as it was in the beginning and will be to the end. In the Fifties the battle raged in the Latin Quarter and almost all the young men of the day, whose names have lived, believed in Courbet as Prophet, champion of the new revelation. Not that they accepted him unconditionally as their master, theirs was a generation much too independent for that, bent as they were on working out their salvation, expressing their realism

each in his own way. But if any one could deliver contemporary art from the Greeks and the Romans, the old enemy of new Independents, they felt it was Courbet.

In the midst of this turmoil, Whistler came to Paris to study under Gleyre, pupil of Ingres and inheritor of the classic tradition. Through mere accident the closest friendship he formed was with Fantin-Latour who belonged to the other camp. Fantin, for a while, was a student at the *Beaux-Arts*, but since 1854 his real study was under de Boisbaudran, first at *l'Ecole de Médecine* where de Boisbaudran was professor, later in de Boisbaudran's own school at 39 *Rue du Quai des Grands-Augustins*. Its fame has lived because of the artists trained there and the methods taught. Rodin, Legros, Lhermitte, Tissot, Cazin, Solon were among Fantin's fellow students and their work shows that de Boisbaudran made them, if not geniuses, for the genius is born, not made, at least uncommonly good workmen, which is the

next best thing. Whistler and Fantin studied under masters so opposed in principle and practice that nothing might strike one as more unlikely than their meeting except that, having met, they should form so close a friendship. The two men were as the poles apart in race and temperament: Whistler an American; Fantin, with his Russian mother, half Slav and the Slav half far stronger than the mixture of French and Italian inherited from his father, as can be seen in his every portrait. Besides, Fantin, though a trifle younger than Whistler, was far more advanced as a student. He had begun his studies as a child under his father who was a painter—of sorts—and he had worked in one or another art school ever since 1851 during the years when Whistler was drilling and parading at West Point and making mechanical drawings for the Government in Washington.

Had the education of the two young students been confined to the schools they probably would never have met. But not in the schools alone did

the students of those unsophisticated days round out their education. Whatever their training, whoever their master, they were not taught to despise the past. No valiant cry from youth then of "Down with the Louvre! Down with the Old Masters!" Youth went reverently to the Louvre to worship, to copy, to endeavor to learn at least a little of what the Old Masters had to teach. I fancy I see the lips of our modern students curl with contempt at the mere thought of such innocence and guileless faith. Probably their respect for Manet as a pioneer of "Modern Art" would be shaken were they to discover that he too was among the copyists and took off his hat to the Great of every age. The youth of that earlier generation, in their simplicity, visited the Louvre in all humility and hoped by studying its masterpieces to become masters in their turn. No creed could have been more inspiring, no training as sound, even if the Louvre could not always, indeed could only very seldom work the miracle.

In the Louvre Whistler and Fantin met and Fantin has told the story. Both of them were copying, not merely for the sake of study but to earn a little money, Fantin having none, Whistler always over lavish with what he had. Probably because it was a surer means of support than his own work Fantin kept it up until 1870 or thereabouts, long after Whistler had become absorbed in his own paintings. Copies of masterpieces were then in vogue among lovers of art who could not afford originals. Fantin copied Rembrandt, Velasquez, Titian, Giorgione, more especially Veronese of whose colour he seemed to have caught the trick. Of *The Marriage Feast at Cana* alone he made five copies before he had done, all commissions, one coming from Harriet Beecher Stowe's brother-in-law, an appreciative patron. Fantin's method was to set up his easel directly in front of the painting in the traditional fashion, though de Boisbaudran's most faithful pupils would memorize a picture in the gallery and paint it after-

wards in the studio. There is a legend that Cuisin, now among the forgotten, startled Fantin, his first day at the *Rue du Quai des Grands-Augustins* school, by painting a head from *The Marriage Feast* without a note or a sketch to help him. Legros was another student prodigy whose "memory drawing" of Holbein's *Erasmus* his biographers seldom fail to chronicle. Fantin, however, was working for patrons more exacting than a professor with a theory. Also, he was extremely conscientious. To one copy alone it is remembered that he devoted two years.

His conscientiousness brought its rewards. More than once, as he sat before Veronese, he saw the great Delacroix, not too great to visit and encourage with advice his pupil Andrieu, busy at the same task of copying. Fantin could not summon up enough courage to speak to Delacroix, but these visits impressed him and led to his occasional desertion of Veronese for the modern master, carrying him so far in his admiration and

respect as to copy passages from *L'Entrée des Croisés à Constantinople.*

Another day Fantin, painting *The Marriage Feast at Cana,* this time for a Mexican patron, chanced to look up just as a strange person—*"un personnage en chapeau bizarre"*—came strolling through the galleries. It was Whistler, whose extraordinary hat attracted attention even in the Latin Quarter where, as a rule, the more correctly a man dressed the more conspicuous he became. The casual stroll did not mean that Whistler saw in the Louvre merely a pleasant place for loafing. He too had commissions for copies, his from amiable friends at home doing what they could to help him along. He was often there, and other contemporaries, Bracquemond among them, recalled afterwards that it was in the Louvre they got to know Whistler and his hat. Something in Fantin's copy no doubt caught Whistler's eye as he passed. With the student's freemasonry, he stopped to look more carefully, to praise, to criti-

cize. Whistler's talk, no less than his clothes, struck those who met him in his early years, as it struck everybody throughout his life. This first meeting, as Fantin put it on record, proved the beginning of their friendship, strengthened that same evening when, by appointment, they continued their talk at the *Café Molière*.

A place to talk in is indispensable to the artist at any age. Fantin found his at first in a small room under the same roof as his father's apartment where he and his student friends assembled of an evening and talked and argued and wrangled, regardless of time and neighbours, until these same neighbours, kept awake till all hours, protested. The talkers then took refuge in the unpretending *Café Taranne* where nobody minded how late they kept it up, not the *patron* himself though one cup of coffee an evening for each might be the extent of their patronage. By the time Whistler met Fantin they had made a second move, now to the *Café Molière* which was

WHISTLER IN THE BIG HAT
The hat that startled the Latin Quarter
Charles L. Freer Collection
National Gallery of American Art, Washington

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to be succeeded by the more famous *Café de Bade* and *Café Guerbois*. At the *Molière* Whistler fell in with Fantin's friends: Legros, Manet, Cazin, Carolus-Duran, Astruc, the German Schölderer, and was soon on terms with the group. To him, Astruc sat for the etching now sold at a price that would have startled both sitter and etcher, could they have foreseen it. In all he seems to have inspired affection if we can judge from the uproarious welcome to *le petit Whistler* on his return from the famous tramp in Alsace with Ernest Delannoy—a story Joseph Pennell and I wrote in our *Life of Whistler*. Occasionally the same group arranged to meet by day at the publishers, Cadart and Chevalier's, at the printer Delâtre's, at *Madame* Desoye's shop in the *Rue de Rivoli*—but this last was later on: good places these for more talk, more argument, more defiance; no one so entirely at home as Whistler, already himself a maker of prints.

If Whistler was soon accepted as friend by

every one of the *Molière* group, so many were the interests they shared, with none was his friendship so strong as with Fantin and Legros, more especially Fantin. Our "Society of Three," he would say. No special bond held them together, no definite formula of faith, as in the case of the earlier Pre-Raphaelites or the later Impressionists. The Three were not missionaries seeking to bring art back to its primitive honesty and sincerity. They were not precursors of a new school seeking to reduce art to a matter of handling. They were innocent of mission or doctrine, their comradeship based solely upon their respect for tradition and the desire for each to do the best that was in him in his own way.

Fantin and Legros, the youngest of the three, appreciated Whistler from the start, loved his gaiety, admired his work. Because he was the gayest of men most people refused to believe that he was the most serious of artists. These two friends could understand his combination of

gaiety and seriousness, though no one could accuse Fantin of gaiety, nor Legros as time went on. Students at de Boisbaudran's considered Legros the life and soul of the class and, in writing of him, it has become the thing to recall that he was a Burgundian and that Burgundians are known for their religious gravity tempered by quiet humour. But it is not for humour, quiet or otherwise, that he is remembered in London and Paris. He came of modest origin and had little education. Already, as a lad, he was forced to take a job with a house painter. At fourteen he had been set to work on the decorations of a church in Lyons. Money, in his case, was more important than knowledge, for his family cares were heavy. Care and gaiety are not often close companions. Youth proved anything but a lark to either Fantin or Legros—a difficult struggle rather.

It is doubtful if, under any circumstances, Fantin's sympathies would have been with the Murger tradition which had not lost its savour

when he was young. Murger's heroes could have given him no points in poverty. Something of his plight is explained in Whistler's drawing of him made in the little room in the *Rue Féron* where Fantin slept at that period and where Whistler, out too late to go back to his own place, would take shelter. Whistler shows Fantin working in bed on a bitter cold winter morning, the bed clothes drawn closely over him, a thick scarf wound about his neck and covering the lower part of his face up to his nose, a top hat tipped down over his forehead, almost meeting the scarf —a drawing that makes one shiver as one looks. *"Fantin au lit à la poursuite de ses études sous des difficultés,"* Whistler wrote in an upper corner of the drawing with the date December 20, 1859. Legros, not often without some sort of work and never unwilling to do it, was perhaps not so desperately poor as Whistler's "no-shirt" friends, joyous students who had and made no money and lived splendidly up to it. All the same it can-

WHISTLER'S SKETCH OF FANTIN-LATOUR DRAWING IN BED
By courtesy of Syndicat de la Propriété Artistique, Paris

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not be said that, at the start, his path was made smooth for him. Ingres regretted that a young man of such talent should be in such a bad way. Only a little later on Whistler found him in so deplorable a condition that he said it needed God or a lesser person to pull him out of it—and Whistler did the pulling. But poverty could never reconcile either Fantin or Legros to the "no-shirt" adventures, the delight of Whistler with his unfailing sense for what he called "the droll" in life. Fantin believed that art demands every sacrifice, forces the artist to leave everything for it. Already Whistler believed that "Art and Joy go together."

For him the adventures of the Quarter were as indispensable to the student's education as working from the model in the master's studio or copying old masterpieces in the Louvre. He played as hard as he worked, with a zest no less conspicuous than his hat wherever he went. The stolid British students thought he never worked.

Fantin and Legros knew better, knew that the traditional life of the Latin Quarter, if without irresistible charm for them, never harmed any student with the right stuff in him. Also they were sure that Whistler did have the right stuff, was as serious as themselves during his hours of work. Had they doubted, they would not have chosen him for friend. Whistler, on his side, understood, learning from them much that served him well until the end. He worked little at Gleyre's where he found neither the training nor the inspiration he needed, getting far more out of talks at the *Café Molière* about de Boisbaudran and the importance of cultivating eye and memory. Fantin had been so far from exemplary in attendance at the school that de Boisbaudran called him "the bird of passage." Still, the master thought enough of this inconstant pupil to leave him five thousand francs in his will. Fantin, on his side, despite his frequent absences believed in both master and method, and no doubt he and

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Whistler too joined Legros and the other students on their excursions through the town and out into the near country, studying and mastering the chosen subject until sure they had it by heart and could put it on canvas when back at their easels the next morning. Whistler may possibly have practised memorizing the pictures in the Louvre. Certainly, whether from talk at the *Café* or from work with de Boisbaudran's followers, he profited. When some years later he painted his *Nocturnes,* studying the beauty of the Thames by night and putting it on canvas in his Chelsea studio by day, his method was that of the famous French master.

Had Whistler's genius and his power of work been questioned in the *Café Molière* doubt would have vanished when he brought back to Paris the series of plates he etched in Alsace on his walking tours there with Ernest in the summer of 1858. Though it was a genuine holiday, full of fun and absurdity, laughter and adventure, it yielded

something else far more important. Several of the plates that are its record were published in *The French Set* and to-day rank among his finest. Fantin, then Whistler's friend for not more than a few months, remembered his return from the Rhine and how impressed the men at the *Café* were when they saw the prints issued the following November. After the publication of the portfolio, it is incredible that Englishmen like Poynter persisted to the end in their idea of Whistler as the Idle Apprentice. From the first the Frenchmen recognized the artist in Whistler and knew that work meant more to him than play. The etchings simply proved what they already believed. Had the fact not been convincing, no shadow of doubt could have lingered after his London holiday the next year, this time bringing back *At the Piano,* a painting familiar through reproductions to many who have never seen the original: the portrait of Lady Haden, a distinguished musician, playing while "little Annie,"

AT THE PIANO. WHISTLER
Lady Haden and her daughter "Little Annie"
In the possession of Edmund Davis, Esq.

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his niece, leans on the piano listening. Fantin's influence has been discovered in this painting. With as much reason, Whistler's influence might be pointed to in Fantin's portraits. The truth is that in those early years Courbet influenced them both and that, naturally, Fantin and Whistler influenced each other as two friends will. For the "Society of Three," as for many other young men of their generation, Courbet had not ceased to be a master.

At the Piano was sent to the *Salon* of 1859. So were three portraits by Fantin—the well-known portrait of his two sisters, one at her tapestry work, one reading; the equally well known portrait of the one sister with her book; the still more famous portrait of himself in white shirt, now at the Museum in Grenoble where he was born. Legros took his chances with a portrait of his father. Luck went against "the Three." All were rejected, as it turned out the best thing that could have happened. The rejection led to no end

of talk, and how students can talk! And how critics and artists who have arrived can talk! I have not yet forgotten, probably never shall forget, the endless talk I listened to in my years of art criticism at the Royal Academy and the two *Salons,* the pitiless dissection of the inanities of the older school, sad victims of outworn conventions! How they were torn to pieces, limb from limb, their injustice, their envy, their narrowness exposed without fear or mercy! London, the home of convention, could wake up at times until the rejection of the new genius cost the old Academicians dear. But to London, art at the best was an occasional diversion. To Paris it was an essential of life and in Paris the revolt of artists became the talk not only of the studios but of the town.

By chance Ribot was among the rejected of 1859 and Ribot was a friend of Bonvin's. So, for that matter, was Fantin. The two of them often camped out side by side as they copied the

same picture in the Louvre. Bonvin's own path had not been the smoothest, he had tasted of the bitterness of disappointment, and he hurried to the rescue. In his studio—his *Atelier Flamand* he called it—in the *Rue St. Jacques* he opened a public exhibition of the rejected pictures, the Whistler, the Legros and two of Fantin's with the others. They might have been overlooked in the *Salon*, who knows? but here at once they were the talk of the town. Everybody crowded to see the victims, the martyrs. One can imagine pretty well what everybody said. The same sort of things are said to-day, if not so eloquently, when the same sort of mistakes are made. Courbet was among the visitors—Courbet the Realist, the Arch-Rebel. He had before this seen pictures by Fantin and passed a favourable verdict, recognizing in them as their great merit the fact that they were not painted to please the *bourgeois*. Now he stood before *At the Piano* and approved with enough emphasis to convince the studio of his

approval, a glorious incident recalled by Fantin long afterwards in his reminiscent note of Whistler. Whistler had already met Courbet, after the meeting had been heard to call him *le grand Courbet*, and this praise must have seemed a consecration.

With the defiant exhibition at Bonvin's the days of apprenticeship were at an end. In one sense of the word an artist is a student all his life. In the more usually accepted sense, he ceases to be a student when he leaves the schools and sets up a studio of his own. Whistler set up his in London, though Paris was not altogether abandoned. He returned frequently during the next few years, sometimes for months at a time. He spent long summers in France painting by the sea in the manner of Courbet or in his company. But his headquarters were always in London, save for a year in Venice and a few years again in Paris when age had overtaken him. It may be that he soon began, as he continued, to abuse

England and all things English. But from the beginning the beauty of London conquered him and it held him in its spell until the end. Because he settled on the banks of the Thames, he felt no temptation to resign from the "Society of Three." Among Whistler's English contemporaries, none could quite take the place of either Fantin or Legros and scarcely was he in London before he insisted upon their joining him where sitters waited and English guineas would be theirs for the asking.

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III

THE SOCIETY OF THREE MEETS IN LONDON

III

The Society of Three Meets in London

WHISTLER, as I have said, was not without an income, small but enough to save him from the garret and starvation of Bohemia. Besides, the Seymour Hadens' house was his home so long as he chose to stay in it. He loved his sister, not until later did his quarrels with Haden begin, altogether he was sufficiently provided for—more than sufficiently, it struck Fantin, always amazed at what he called Whistler's "*bonheur insolent.*"

And no wonder, for conditions with Fantin, and with Legros too, were during years much less happy, both penniless and dependent on their art, the families of both continuing to look to them for help. True, they almost at once earned a reputation at Bonvin's, but not the kind that leads to a steady income. And they were ambitious,

with too much faith in their talent to devote it wholly to the copying of other men's work, however great these other men might be, or however useful the price paid for the copies certainly was. At the start Paris showed itself niggardly in supplying them with patrons. Whistler understood their plight perhaps better than any one, also appreciated the soundness, the distinction of their painting. So he did not rest until he had induced them to cross the Channel for a visit and to take their chances in London. During Whistler's lifetime few credited him with consideration for others; the truth is his generosity knew no limits —until it was taken advantage of. He would be no man's dupe and he ranked ingratitude as one of the Seven Deadly Sins. In that early period none of the old Paris friends could come to London that he did not go out of his way to be of use to them. Cadart and Daubigny were shown about and dined by him. He bought a picture of Bonvin

jeune, Bonvin's brother. And he saw to it that Haden seconded him in his hospitality.

I am no great admirer of Haden as a man. I think his conduct to Whistler mistaken at the beginning and undignified later on in his fear of Whistler's wit. But for one thing he should have the praise due to him. While he and his wife's brother were on terms, he was unbelievably hospitable to that brother's friends. To them the Hadens' house was open. Even the "no shirt friends" were received, even the absurd and delightful Ernest Delannoy, shuffling about the house in slippers so the servants might not see his disgraceful shoes, concealing nothing of his astonishment when what he called "The Niagara" was turned on in the bathroom. He must have been a thorn in the flesh to Haden.

With Ernest, Fantin and Legros had little in common, neither of them inclined to the so-called Bohemianism of which more was heard in those days than now. The first letter in my unrivalled

little collection is from Haden to Fantin, a cordial invitation to Sloane Street, to which Whistler added a note of directions and explanations, a note so faded with time as to be almost illegible. Fantin found England a Paradise—all except the street organist's unquenchable fancy for Verdi's *Miserere*, this a slight drawback, however, to his enjoyment of London's social life for which his experiences in Paris but ill equipped him. The abundance, the extravagance at Haden's, the manner of living in a rich Englishman's house, amazed him and into his letters have crept his wonder at the champagne that every day at dinner flowed like water and gave the scale of the prevailing luxury. If unprepared for such astonishingly new conditions, he recognized the obligation of conforming to them so long as he remained a guest. He arrived without dress clothes. Ernest, under the same circumstances, would have left none of the household in ignorance of his plight. Fantin simply scraped together somehow

THE MUSIC ROOM, AT THE HADEN HOUSE
Sir Seymour Haden, Traer and Lady Haden
From the Etching by Whistler

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enough money to buy what was necessary to do in England as the English do, and, laughing at his concession to social forms, he wrote to tell his mother how fine a figure he cut in his social uniform.

Fantin's first visit was in 1859, Whistler promising him his pictures would be bought and his reputation made. The francs of waiting patrons rolled up to hundreds and thousands in Whistler's letters, and the commissions lavished upon Legros, already a visitor, were quoted as an example of what England could and would do for the artist. Why continue to turn out copies to oblige *ces crétins* of patrons and sacrifice his really herculean genius for the creation of masterpieces of his own? Alphonse could not touch brush to canvas without a thousand francs dropping into his hand. Once Fantin's flowers and fruit were seen in London, the demand would follow, and to make sure they should be seen Whistler always had one or two or more in the Lindsey Row studio

to show to friends and visitors. The irony of it was that Fantin did not hold his *natures mortes*, as he called them, in much higher esteem than his copies. To be obliged to paint flowers when he had more ideas in his head than he knew what to do with! as before long he was writing to Edwin Edwards, and he had a vision of Michael Angelo stranded in front of roses and poppies. However, the rent of his father's apartment and his sister's bills at Charenton left him little choice and Whistler's practical argument could not well be resisted. Besides, if success for Alphonse was assured, why should it not be for Fantin? Haden confirmed the argument by ordering a copy of *The Marriage Feast at Cana.* I fancy Haden liked playing the art patron. To Legros as well he condescended, from him buying not a copy, but an original painting, *L'Angelus.*

The purchase led to trouble. Haden might have hesitated to tinker with *The Marriage Feast* but *L'Angelus* was another matter and, Legros safe

again in Paris, he set about improving it according to his idea. Unfortunately, before he had done with his improvements, Legros returned, this time to stay with Whistler, who, after a passing dream of a house in the country with a spacious studio, had settled at Number 7. Lindsey Row, Chelsea. The two young men dined at the Hadens' in the absence of the great "surgeon-etcher" and, there, in a gorgeous frame and a conspicuous place, they saw the picture. The frame at first dazzled Legros but, presently, when he had eyes for the picture in the frame, he discovered with dismay that the quiet grey tones of his church as he painted it in the quiet grey twilight, were lost in the fiery reds and yellows of a blazing Turner sunset according to Haden. The desecration was more than Legros could accept—"the brother-in-law's crime", Whistler called it when, to Fantin, he described the rage, the righteous rage of Legros, the prompt capture of the dishonoured picture by the two indignant artists, their escape with

it in a hansom to the Lindsey Row studio, their attack upon the sunset with spirits, benzine, knife and razor, until Haden's sunset and perspective passed completely away. Haden, on his return, could not long remain in ignorance of the raid and doubtless his fury rivalled the wrath of Whistler and Legros. However, he allowed himself an interval for reflection and upon his next visit to Lindsey Row nothing marred his usual courtesy and condescension. A reception as charming awaited him, the situation being one after Whistler's own heart, though I doubt if Legros shared his joy. For a while Haden pretended not to see the picture which stared him in the face from a prominent easel, his work entirely gone, the repainting not yet begun. "Ah!" he said at last, "so you have wiped it all out. Well, do it better." "*Oui*," said Legros, a simple answer but one little calculated to turn away wrath.

Fantin paid Haden a second visit in 1861. On the third visit to London in 1864 he stayed at

LINDSEY ROW
From the Etching by Joseph Pennell
Whistler lived in the houses
at each end of the row

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Lindsey Row. Whistler introduced him to Alexander Ionides of the well-known Greek family established in London, a genuine lover of art, a collector ever ready with commissions for the young artist of promise. Through Ionides he got to know many others of the wealthy Greek colony, almost all given to collecting. And Whistler arranged to have Fantin visit with him the Potters, old friends of the Whistlers, who had a large house near Manchester. Oh! the big house, the huge family, the swarms of children, the many visitors, the endless dinners, the impressive butler! The formality of it all got on Fantin's nerves. But Whistler had secured for him a commission to paint Mrs. Potter and, as we say now, that was that. A not only pleasanter but more important introduction of Whistler's was to Ridley, the painter, thanks to whom Fantin was presently received on terms of close intimacy by Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Edwards. Edwards though a lawyer was something of an artist, and he and

his wife devoted themselves to Fantin, became not only his close friends but important factors in his early success. Indeed, the question is, what would have become of him without them? He had good reason later in life to recall *"les jolies journées chez Edwards à Sunbury"* at their country house—the wonderful summer nights, the music, Beethoven, for Mr. and Mrs. Edwards were musicians. And the friendship was profitable no less than delightful to him. They were not content simply to buy his pictures for themselves, but they acted as his agents. When Edwards died, Mrs. Edwards continued to look out for him, selling his work from her London house in Golden Square, sending it to the Royal Academy and other galleries where it was exhibited. His struggle at the start would have been well-nigh hopeless had they not watched over him. The sums secured for his small paintings of flowers and fruit struck him as fabulous. What would he have thought, I wonder, of the two thousand pounds

MR. AND MRS. EDWIN EDWARDS
The Portrait by Fantin-Latour
In the National Gallery, London

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one of these canvases fetched not long since at Christie's?

To Mr. and Mrs. Edwards Fantin owed much in his youthful beginning, it is true. But he realized, better than anybody, that without Whistler he might never have come to England, might never have met Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, and he did not forget. He was grateful to the end and not ashamed of his gratitude. After Whistler's death he put in writing his wish to make it known that Whistler introduced him to England and thus laid the foundation of his fortunes: a genuine tribute to the first of the "Society of Three" who laid aside canvas and brush forever.

In London, as in Paris, Whistler relied upon Fantin and Legros for advice, criticism and sympathy, for the talks, the discussions, the confidences that are as the breath of life to the young artist. Legros paid long visits to Whistler at Number 7., at times lived there, and finally settled in London. Reason for correspondence between the

two was less and what letters from Whistler Legros may have received, I doubt if he felt inclined later on to preserve which would be a pity. Fantin visited London seldom, never made it his home, and copious correspondence with Whistler was the result. Whistler could write on the subjects nearest his heart more freely and frankly to Fantin that he could talk to anyone in London, not excepting Legros. With English artists he was mostly out of sympathy. Their attitude puzzled the young American trained in Paris. He was friendly with a few, he fell in again with the group he first met in Paris—Poynter, Du Maurier, Leighton, Armstrong. For a while he shared a London studio with Du Maurier, though the wonder to me is how the two managed to endure each other for a day, let alone months. What Du Maurier felt about Whistler he explained long afterwards in *Trilby*. For years, apparently, he nourished his curious misunderstanding, his disapproval, his contempt, his ill natured concep-

tion of Whistler's character, until, finally, as if it hurt to keep his feelings bottled up within himself, he wrote and drew his caricature of Whistler as Joe Sibley. If the British students in Paris had no clue to the real Whistler, inevitably the British artists at home were much more bewildered. And they, including the friendliest, were as completely a puzzle to him. Curiously, he got on best with Rossetti—"the one white man in all that crowd," his description in after years. But Rossetti approached art through literature, an approach incomprehensible to Whistler, who therefore could not have talked to him as to Fantin, to Legros, to the men of the *Café Molière*. Rossetti shared Whistler's love of blue-and-white china, not Whistler's views upon art, and Whistler quickly outlived his first inclination to admire Rossetti the artist. When art became the topic of conversation, each probably thought the other talked nonsense.

British art in the Sixties had sunk to the depths.

The power of the Royal Academy in the second half of the Nineteenth Century must be incomprehensible to the present generation. It held the monopoly of art in the British Isles, looked upon all foreign art as an abomination. The work it refused ran small chance of acceptance in any self-respecting gallery and it recognized no standard save the picture with a story—the anecdote in paint, to borrow the Victorian jargon of the day. There were occasional efforts to escape the tyranny, to expose the narrow Philistinism—I am using the adjectives and expressions of the period—but defiance proved in vain.

The Pre-Raphaelites gave up the fight at an early date. Millais and the sculptor Woolner were already or about to be swallowed up by all-powerful Burlington House. Dante Rossetti no longer identified himself with any group or party, an attitude adopted by his follower, Burne-Jones. Holman Hunt, alone of the Brotherhood, remained faithful to Pre-Raphaelite principles until the last.

Some years were to pass before other new departures startled London, before Whistler the Idle Apprentice, the Butterfly, the Coxcomb, was hailed as master by *les jeunes*, before certain British students brought back from Paris schools technical standards revolutionary to the Academy-trained. The change depended not altogether upon indifference to anecdote; story-telling on canvas was not then disdained in Paris. Only there, thanks to Courbet, the life of the day furnished the anecdote more often than the classical dictionary or mediaeval romance. The Funeral at Ornans strikes us now as aeons away—as it was—from Leighton's Garden of the Hesperides or Alma-Tadema's Feast of Heliogabalus. And the French artists' greater respect for technique demanded that the anecdote should be stated in more painter-like language, eventually substituting the painted photograph for the painted anecdote, the new school of British Realists accepting

the square brush mark for symbol and Bastien-Lepage for Prophet.

Where art is concerned, the widest of wide gulfs stretches between France and England. In the London of the Sixties no one as yet foresaw the awakening. Whistler stood alone.

Therefore, he depended for sympathy as much as ever upon Fantin, the greater part of whose time was spent far away in Paris. The talk went on, not in the Louvre, not in the studio, not over after-dinner coffee and *cognac* in the *Café*, but on paper, a less satisfactory medium of gossip and confidence and confession. He was keen to know what they were talking about at the *Café*—what news on the Rialto?—keen to have them know his successes, believing that the good general's duty, when he has won a battle is to say so; otherwise, no one will ever hear of it. And he was no less serious than gay and gossipy. Indeed, Whistler's side of the correspondence leaves the reader to wonder at the blindness of

his contemporaries who questioned his seriousness. As one reads, one seems to see him, deserting easel for desk after hours of successful work or fruitless endeavour, to seek comfort from perhaps the only man he was sure could and would follow him up to the heights of his hope and down to the depths of his despair, the only man ready to share his every struggle, his every triumph, to appreciate the earnestness of his endeavour. As time went on Fantin, who thought he knew Whistler thoroughly, was astounded at the will and perseverance he revealed—felt that he fully justified his boast of his patience, of his never giving up anything he had begun. "Whistler has shown me a side that I did not know was in him," Fantin confided to Edwin Edwards in 1864. Fantin, on his side, during those early years, was learning from his own experience something of the exultation of hope no less than the bitterness of despair, alternating between one extreme and the other—"*Jamais content, jamais*

satisfait," was the way he put it to Edwards. Personal experience fitted him for the role of Whistler's confidant and confessor. I have read many of Whistler's letters, but none so intimate and self-revealing as these to Fantin.

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IV

THE FIRST WANDERYEARS

IV

The First Wanderyears

WHISTLER could not cut himself altogether adrift from Paris where the value of art in the scheme of life is duly recognized. In London art always has been and, the chances are, always will be a side issue. Acutely conscious of the difference, he returned again and again to Paris to renew his studies and revive his spirits in its more congenial atmosphere. In the winter of 1861–62 he settled down there as if he meant to stay permanently, taking a studio in the *Boulevard des Batignolles*, bringing Jo with him to pose for *The White Girl.* No need now to write to Fantin whom he could see daily, meet at the *Café*, discuss those never-ending problems of art that artists have discussed volubly, violently, joyfully since the first man, who "stayed behind" to scratch lines on a pot for decoration, was

joined by a second bent upon the same civilising job.

When summer came Whistler deserted Paris and Fantin, little as he cared to leave the friend he longed to keep at his side for talk, for sympathy, for sheer friendship's sake. But he liked to wander at that time of the year, to work out of doors, and France was by preference the camping ground. One year he chose Brittany by the Sea, another Trouville where he was glad to find Courbet, who fell in love with Jo's copper-gold hair and painted *La Belle Irlandaise*. In 1862 his choice was for the Pyrenees near the coast. He could not leave Jo at home, she was too essential to him as model. To take her with him about exhausted his finances, nothing left to extend an invitation to a friend. As to Fantin, his finances would not allow him to face the luxury of travel, to the great disappointment of Whistler who craved his company and, more important perhaps, his criticism.

NOTE BLANCHE: PORTRAIT OF JO. WHISTLER
Painted when under the influence of Courbet
Once in the possession of Mrs. Cobden Sanderson

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Whistler, according to the popular idea, was offensively self-sufficing. Whistler, as he was, depended more upon his friends than most men. Only, if his friends played him false, he refused to take it lying down, in his enmity as wholehearted as in his friendship, defending himself by a wit so keen that the echo of its bitterness has not yet died away. Inevitably, perhaps, the world heard more of Whistler the Enemy than of Whistler the Friend.

The need for Fantin was acute in the summer of 1862 while Whistler and Jo were down in the Pyrenees, staying part of the time *chez Monsieur Louis Daguerre* at Guéthary, part of the time at Biarritz and St. Jean de Luz, Spain just across the frontier. Spain meant Velasquez, the master before whose canvases the two friends most often stood together in the Louvre, studying, discussing, worshipping, promising themselves to stand together again one day and to continue their worship and discussion, before the greater mas-

terpieces in the Prado. Legros, somehow, managed to make the journey in 1860, and no doubt brought back a glowing report that kindled to fever heat the desire of Whistler and Fantin. They belonged to the generation who re-discovered Velasquez, restoring him to the pinnacle to which the iconoclasts who cast him down fondly believed he could never return. Whistler recognized in him the master who first filled his canvas with air and made his people stand upon their legs. Both friends had studied him in the Louvre where Whistler, according to Fantin, copied *The Cavaliers*. In London at the National Gallery, nothing struck Fantin so forcibly, so delightfully as *The Hunt*, the truest, the most beautiful painting he found there. But then he had never been to Madrid, was never to go as Fate would have it. Whistler urged Fantin to manage the journey to Guéthary somehow. This was their opportunity. Madrid might never be so near—which was prophetic, it never was—and in Madrid *The Lances*

and *The Spinners*, and how many great pictures besides waited to repay them for the time and money spent, however recklessly, to reach the shrine. The journey would remain an inspiration throughout their lives.

He worked on his own pictures in the meanwhile, now hoping, now despairing—"*Mon Dieu, que c'est difficile*," he groaned to Fantin. Subjects were wonderful, the composition he found for them not bad and of one he made a little sketch in a letter:—an angry sky, breakers so solid they seemed carved in stone, and on the rocky shore a group of figures, among them Jo in pale rose with an old woman in black standing at her side. A fairly good arrangement, he thought, but he was discouragingly slow, too slow, indeed, to finish the painting. Matters no doubt were made worse by the only other painter at Guéthary, an old man, with evidently an old man's prejudice against youth. The young painter would never get anywhere, the old painter

warned, if he failed to use the right size canvas and paint his waves with bitumen, the way all the Van Der Dutchmen painted theirs—the bitumen destined in Munich to work havoc with the painting of many a young genius. In the midst of Whistler's difficulties and this unfriendly criticism, the thought of Velasquez shone as a steady light in the darkness. If he must give up hope of Fantin, he would go alone, alone visit that long gallery with the large and small masterpieces of which they had so often talked, and he would use his eyes for Fantin no less than for himself. Also, he promised to get photographs, if photographs were to be had. But as to making copies: *"Tu sais, ça doit être de cette glorieuse peinture qui ne se laisse pas copier—ça doit trop vous entrainer. Ah mon cher, comme il a du travailler!"* Here was a cry from the heart—how he must have worked!—and what an inspiration to remember that the master, like the student could not achieve success without hard labour.

The Idle Apprentice knew, none better, that the creation of beauty is not spontaneous but comes of long concentration and toil.

From the hopes and disappointments of that summer Whistler learned a great deal. The failure of his big canvas helped to confirm his faith in de Boisbaudran. He began to wonder if anything more ambitious than a big sketch could be made out-of-doors. The effect he sought to capture on his canvas was here one minute and gone the next. Facts could be memorized and perhaps notes jotted down, but it was better to paint the picture in the studio: "Yes, the painting of Nature should be done at home," a theory shared by Fantin. Whistler also began to doubt the wisdom of travelling so far in search of motives, of hoping to see a strange country as it really is at a glance. Only with time and experience could one accustom one's self to the new surroundings, understand the new landscape, master the new play of light, the new effects of atmos-

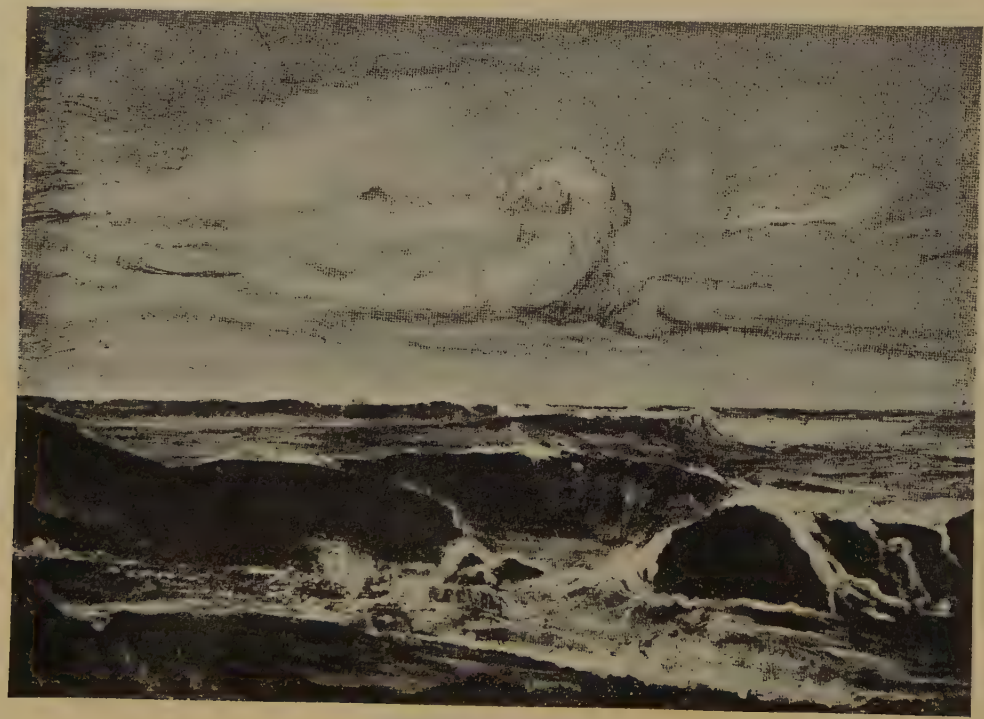
phere. After a very few years he seldom strayed further from home than his old familiar painting grounds. That inexplicable journey to Valparaiso was the exception. No second visit followed his first to Venice, and the first might never have been save for the necessity of accepting any commission that presented itself after the bankruptcy. London and Paris could be trusted to supply the effects and subjects he loved and knew best. Occasionally a little journey to Holland or Belgium or Ireland seemed worth while, but chiefly because the journey was short and the skies and light in these countries differed little from the well-known, the well-loved skies and light of England and France.

At Guéthary the uncertainty of the climate proved a drawback. To its vileness he owed the leisure for letters, long letters signed "Jim Whistler", begging for news of Alphonse, and Ernest and Drouet; deploring his waste of time, the strangeness of the new conditions, his lack of

success; above all, damning the weather. He could not decide which offended him more, the rain that poured most of the time or the sun that swallowed up tone and variety, reducing the sea to flatness good for nothing save to be spat upon, He was no lover of the sun. His pleasure was in Nature's more tranquil, mysterious moods, Nature as he revealed her in the Nocturnes and in his beautiful description of London at the hour "when evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil"—a description as often quoted as the portrait of his Mother is reproduced, neither staled by the unexpected popularity. Of the tender tones of twilight, of the miracle of dusk he could never have enough, though he was not altogether indifferent to colour, to Nature's more brilliant harmonies.

He tried his luck with weather and work at Biarritz, getting himself almost drowned and painting *The Blue Wave*. To have painted that vigorous canvas alone more than made up for

the failures and disappointments at Guéthary. He lingered for a while at St. Jean de Luz, in as absolutely a French France as could be wished, but if he travelled no further than across the river, he was in Fuenterrabia, a town as Spanish as if France were leagues away, full of the colour the most ardent sun worshipper could ask for, and, little of a sun worshipper as he was, he rejoiced in its colour and gaiety. It was picturesque in just the picturesque operatic fashion of his imagining: houses all balconies where pretty dark girls sat for ever drinking chocolate; streets full of Spaniards in *béret* and red blouse, figures out of *l'opéra comique*; swarms of children looking like so many little Turks; nobody understanding a word of French. He loved it, loved the character, the colour; nevertheless, it did not give him what he most cared to paint. An etching of Fuenterrabia was the one thing he went so far as to plan, but I am not sure of his ever having made it. And he never again set foot on Spanish soil.



THE BLUE WAVE. WHISTLER
Painted at Biarritz in the summer of 1862
In the possession of A. A. Pope, Esq.

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The more one knows of Whistler, the more one knows of Fantin, the more inexplicable is the strength of their friendship. A monastic cell or the desert would have been Fantin's appropriate background. In a drawing room Whistler loved to pose. What is called society drove Fantin into a fever; worry followed fast upon pleasure or the hint of it. On the other hand, without society and pleasure, without movement about him, Whistler could not live. Fantin made his profession of faith when he wrote to Edwin Edwards: *"Voilà ma religion, l'art. Voilà le seul idéal, la seule chose pure dans l'homme."* Money was a necessity, without which he could not exist, could not paint; otherwise he would have shut himself up in his studio, never bothering about exhibitions and patrons, honours and recognition. That was not Whistler's way. Art meant as much to him as to Fantin. But he could not bolt his studio door and live like a recluse in Fantin's fashion. If exhibitions were held, he wanted to

be in them; he saw in patrons symbols of success. He looked upon honours and recognition as his right. The knowledge gained through the practice of his art satisfied Fantin. Whistler appreciated no less the truths he wrested from each new problem tackled. But this was not enough. He wanted as well results that could be shown and seen, talked about, approved.

At Guéthary that summer he suffered moments—long moments—of despair, doubting whether the painting he described so joyfully to Fantin would be seen by anyone save himself. Things went very wrong. The rain, day after day of it, interrupted, interfered. Nor were clear skies, for some reason, the least bit friendlier. He worked and worked, and nothing came of it. He fell into black despair.

Another keen disappointment was what he fancied the lack of success of his Thames etchings exhibited in the spring at Martinet's in Paris. Looking back now, it seems as if he could have

asked for no greater success than the favourable notice Baudelaire gave him in *Le Boulevard.* Whistler was then hardly known outside the Quarter. But Baudelaire, when he saw the prints at Martinet's, recognized them at once as the work of an artist and wrote with what strikes me as enthusiasm for the newcomer. That was not the way it struck Whistler, however. To him the enthusiasm seemed for the Thames rather than for the artist, for the poetry of the river rather than the quality of the prints. *"On fait encore mieux les articles à Londres,* was his laconic comment to Fantin, who had sent a copy of the paper to Guéthary.

Fantin did not encourage Whistler in his misery over the failures and disappointments of the summer, did not condole with him on the lack of personal praise in Baudelaire's really appreciative criticism. He wrote a straightforward letter no matter at what risk of its being unpalatable. He played the judge and pronounced judgment:

"le nommé Whistler aime trop la réussite." Whistler accepted it humbly, gratefully. He knew Fantin, knew that Fantin could not say, could not write anything except what he thought the truth, and therefore trusted the soundness of his judgment as implicitly as the honesty of his words. *"Mea culpa!"* cried Whistler from the moral cold bath into which the letter plunged him. Nothing in their long friendship better explains the relations of the two men, nothing shows more clearly how different was Fantin's Whistler from the vain, egotistical, conceited, overbearing, impossible Whistler that London discovered in him.

By the end of the summer Whistler reconciled himself to the inevitable. Fantin could not come; well then, the journey, the holy pilgrimage to Madrid must be postponed, but only for a year. In the meanwhile, mere prosaic matters could be attended to. Martinet, the dealer, in whose gallery Baudelaire had seen the etchings and grown lyrical over the poetry of the Thames, must be

prepared for the coming of Whistler who wanted to exhibit with him again, and thought of sending him *Old Westminster Bridge*. Details could be arranged during Whistler's stay in Paris where he and Fantin could once more meet and talk in the good old fashion, settling the affairs of art and the universe between them.

If Whistler loved excitement the years in passing were prodigal in supplying it, though few in such ample measure as 1863. It was the year of the famous *Salon des Refusés*. The *Salon*, like the Royal Academy in London has too often thought it fine to discipline youthful talent by refusing it recognition or a place in the annual exhibition. The more promising the talent, one might think, the more inevitable the discipline. In 1863 the *Salon* went to such extremes in discouraging the brilliant younger men that the matter became a public, even a political scandal, so great that Napoleon III stepped in, took up arms for the rejected and ordered a separate exhibition of their work

in the official building. Whistler was one of the group so honoured, a group worth honouring, including hardly a man whose name is not remembered to-day—Fantin, Legros, Manet, Bracquemond, Jongkind, Harpignies, Cazin. Whistler's picture was *The White Girl, La Fille Blanche*, which had suffered the same fate in London the year before when the Academy turned it down with work by other men and a special exhibition of the rejected was held. Only, in London amends came from not the throne, but a dealer. One can hardly imagine Queen Victoria stepping in to save that sort of a situation. Whistler had brought the painting over from London to Fantin's studio, where he put it in its frame and dispatched it to the *Salon*, confident of success, Fantin sending his much talked-about *Féerie*, a painting that shortly afterwards joined the *Natures Mortes* in Lindsey Row. The shock of the second rejection by the *Salon* jury, though great, was easy to bear when Whistler found he suffered in such good

THE WHITE GIRL. WHISTLER
SYMPHONY IN WHITE, NO. I
Shown in the famous *Salon des Refusés* of 1863
In the possession of J. H. Whittemore, Esq.

STEPHENS COLLEGE,
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company. In Paris now, as in London the year before, a dealer—Martinet—extended the hospitality of a dealer's gallery to the group. Whistler had already left Paris on his way, with Legros, to Holland, Rembrandt's country. In Amsterdam he heard the news. He wrote at once to Martinet giving him permission to show *The White Girl* and the necessary order to get it from the *Salon*. Fortunately the Emperor's invitation, forwarded by Fantin, reached Whistler in time for him to cancel the order to Martinet and joyfully accept.

The whole affair enchanted Whistler. This splendid imperial interference was just the sort of thing to appeal to him. He had no use for democracy in art. The artist stood on a plane apart from the herd, and the Emperor, if unwise in other matters, showed wisdom itself in this. Charming, Whistler thought, altogether charming. Nothing in fact could have been better, for though eventually the Rejected were bound to

be recognized, the Emperor, by his intelligent policy ensured their recognition at once. Whistler, far away in Holland, longed to be in it, to see himself and Jo on such distinguished walls, with their imperial laurels still fresh. But Holland would not let him go. The spell of Dutch art held him. I do not know that he accomplished anything there that year, save the one etching. But in the country of Rembrandt, he would not repeat, if he could help it, the disappointment of the summer before when next door to the country of Velasquez. Of the opportunities Holland offered he and Legros made the most. Face to face with the Dutch masterpieces, I can imagine his humility. Many years later, when old and his fame unquestioned, he took me with him to the National Gallery in London where I saw for myself his reverence in front of the Masters. In Holland, on this first visit, he was young, no cloud cast over his natural enthusiasm by the misunderstanding and prejudice of his contemporaries.

Rembrandt inspired him to declare, no matter who heard him, that *The Night Watch* was a marvel, if different from what he fancied it would be and finer. Who could think, he wondered, Van Der Helst, in comparison with Rembrandt, anything save mediocrity *au ne plus ultra*?

His homage to Rembrandt duly rendered, Paris beckoned. But work, a stern tyrant, ordered him to London where Fantin must join him to gather in the English guineas—it was invariably guineas with Whistler, he had no use for pounds. Whatever opportunities waited him in London, Fantin must share. Whistler always sought the success of his friends, always believed in their genius, though the outsider saw in him an egoist whose egoism had seldom been equalled. But the outsider would not be an outsider if he understood.

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V

THE THREE MEET AND REMAIN ON FANTIN'S CANVAS

V

The Three Meet and Remain on Fantin's Canvas

HAD luck been kinder when Joseph Pennell and I were writing our Whistler Biography, a second collection from the office of Anderson Rose would have materialized then instead of waiting until only the day before yesterday to fall into a bookseller's hands. I have explained that Rose was Whistler's solicitor and that, fortunately, we had the chance of buying the first collection of his papers sold—the documents concerning the *Whistler v. Ruskin* case—and the pleasure of adding them to our Whistleriana in the Library of Congress. The documents to which I now refer—"human documents", if any ever deserved the name Zola once made a literary fashion—are of a much earlier date. The bookseller was unkind enough to want more money than I had to pay for them. I was not

in London at the time and could not look over the collection but he issued a most interesting Catalogue. It alone would have lightened our task when we were laboriously gathering together the details of Whistler's life during the Sixties, and it has smoothed my way now through that crowded decade.

The period of storm and stress seldom outstrips youth for the ordinary mortal, always age must, in a measure, subdue its violence. Whistler was so well armed for battle as I remember him in the Nineties that I can imagine his splendid readiness in the Sixties, his ambition as an artist in its youthful keenness, his gaiety as a man in its first exuberance: a prodigious amount of work done in the studio, a prodigious amount of play done out of it. I fancy he never ceased to be a surprise to Fantin who, in a religious age, would probably have retired from the world to a cloister and there spent his days painting saints and angels, the Madonna and Child, instead of ladies

from his beloved land of *Féerie*. The monk's habit and tonsure would have well become him. I do not see how two men could have been more unlike by temperament; their unlikeness no doubt the strongest tie between them. Fantin, with his monkish tendency, had it in him to make an excellent father confessor. Whistler, though not apt to pose as penitent, was ready to confess his vices and his virtues to a friend, and a good deal, perhaps too much, was going on in Lindsey Row that it relieved him to pour into Fantin's sympathetic ear.

Whistler could not live with Seymour Haden but neither could he live alone. Never was a man more in need of life around him, never did a man keep a wider open door. Legros stayed with him at No. 7 for quite a while. Jo was established there, a model always at hand. This was an arrangement calculated to offend the British public, then wallowing in the deepest depths of Victorian decorum. Apparently the brother-in-law

became suddenly aware of the irregularity of the establishment and fearful of the dreadful things that might be said should he continue to condone it. The crisis came with his acceptance of an invitation to dine at Lindsey Row and bring a cousin with him. Only after he accepted, did it seem to occur to him that people might talk should he lend his presence to so ill-ordered a household. To figure in a scandal would be no sort of useful *réclame* for a surgeon-etcher, and his acceptance was promptly followed by the request that Jo should not appear at dinner. Anybody who knew Whistler would not need to be told of the rage kindled by this request nor of the discomfort bound to follow for the unlucky offender. However, by its very force Whistler's rage quickly exhausted itself, only to cool down into a humorous indignation far more unpleasant to face. Whistler sent no letter to Haden. He remembered the wise man who said "Never write, never burn!" Instead, he called at Sloane Square and

spoke his mind. This may have been, very likely was, the occasion when Haden pursued him, scolding, from the studio at the top of the house down to the front door, where he remembered he had left his hat upstairs. "And now," he groaned, "have we to go through this all over again?" which, under the circumstances was hardly an ingratiating remark. The visit was annoying for Haden and little calculated to improve the relations between the brothers-in-law.

The domestic arrangement, offensive to Haden, suited Whistler admirably. That it would not suit his mother was a foregone conclusion and she was to arrive early in 1864, sooner than he expected. The house must be cleared of his guests, cleaned from garret to cellar. Quarters must be found for Legros at distressingly short notice, quarters found for Jo. The ways of artists were not Mrs. Whistler's ways and her comfort counted first with Whistler. He spared himself no pains to reduce everything to order, so that, immedi-

ately upon her arrival, he might adapt his life to hers—the life of the artist son to the life of the Puritan mother.

No interruption, light or serious, kept Whistler long from his studio. His responsibilities were many and many the domestic duties which people who did not know him had an idea he shirked. But, no matter what his domestic responsibilities and duties, he refused to allow his work to suffer. He realized the disadvantage of having begun his studies at a later age than most of his contemporaries and he never ceased to regret the time lost, never ceased to struggle to make up for it. He envied Fantin who had wasted none of his life training to be an Army Officer, or a Government Draughtsman, or anything that the artist is not intended to be by Nature. If only I knew just a little of what you know! was the cry from his heart to his more fortunate friend, all the more despairing because of the domestic upheaval in Lindsey Row and its inevitable inter-

ruptions. Everything bristled with difficulties and the problems of paint overwhelmed him. He was forever rubbing, wiping, scraping out, forever discouraged, to-day sure of success, to-morrow as sure of failure. Paintings must be in time for the *Salon* and the Royal Academy. Now the Japanese series, all to be masterpieces, preoccupied him; now *Wapping*, painted from the old inn on the Lower Thames, its interest the greater to us to-day because Legros and Jo posed for two of the figures—Jo with her beautiful red hair, a touch not of gold but of copper in it, everything he had dreamed of the Venetians, he confided to Fantin. He loved this painting, made a little sketch of it in one of his letters, and its fate was to hang long forgotten in an out-of-the-way corner in the Baltimore house of a Baltimore cousin. Only a few years ago was it rescued, cracked and dirty, and turned over to a restorer to do what he could with it, so that now cracks and dirt have disappeared.

Whistler's plans and projects were never too

absorbing for him to forget Fantin's, and in 1863 and 1864, Fantin gave special reason to be remembered. He had undertaken to paint one of the most important pictures in size and subject attempted by the younger painters of the day: the large *Hommage à Delacroix.* Delacroix, now dead for a year, had escaped the rubbish heap of lost reputations which, thanks to Courbet, claimed the less distinguished but more popular Romanticists. Fantin's idea was to represent a few of the younger Realists gathered together before the master's portrait in token of the new generation's recognition and respect, little in sympathy as their methods were with his. At first, following Baudelaire's suggestion I believe, he played with the plan of including not the youthful painters inspired by Delacroix but the great authors of earlier days—Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe—who inspired Delacroix. According to the next scheme —Fantin's own I am sure, so characteristic is it of him—symbolical figures in appropriate drap-

PROMENADES AU SALON DE 1864, — par Bertall (suite).

677. LE TESTAMENT DE CÉSAR GIRODOT, par Fantin Latour.

Le tableau est navrant de tristesse. On vient de délivrer les legs. Les légataires sont furieux et désolés. Le plus important, celui du milieu, est à son grand regret héritier du sac à charbon qu'il vient de revêtir, et de vieilles gratures de palette. Son voisin de gauche d'un soulier, vieux serviteur de Balzac; celui de droite, d'un [illegible] de blanc de zinc; son camarade, d'une vessie de vert Véronèse. Les autres n'ont rien que du noir, sauf un seul, moins attristé peut-être, qui recueille avec soin le chien du maître.

CONTEMPORARY CARICATURE OF FANTIN'S *HOMMAGE À DELACROIX*

By courtesy of Syndicat de la Propriété Artistique, Paris

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eries were to mingle with rising young painters in the matter-of-fact coats and trousers of the Sixties. Allegory, symbolism and romance tempted Fantin to the end, confirmed Romanticist as he was by nature even if he did think himself a Realist and was never so eloquent in paint as when he stuck to hard fact.

It seems that Franz Hals saved him from the deplorable mess he contemplated. Either he saw copies of the Regent pictures or, less likely, visited Haarlem at just the right moment to realize the greater value in such a composition of real flesh and blood, unaccompanied by inappropriate beings from the Land of Make-Believe. Besides, recognition from living men would have meant more to Delacroix, whose Romanticism never destroyed his common sense, than pæans of praise from the heavenly hosts. The result of Fantin's decision is that his big canvas lives not only as an admirable painting, but as a valuable record of a group of men whose names will always be hon-

oured in the history of art. Fantin himself appears and with him are the friends of his youth, Whistler, Manet, Legros and Bracquemond. Baudelaire was included, out of appreciation of him as art critic perhaps, or perhaps in gratitude for his recognition of one of the group, Legros, whom he had chosen to illustrate his translations of Poe's stories. Champfleury's claim to a place was, no doubt, his written recognition of them all, more especially Legros, who was apparently at that period a favourite among the critics, and to Champfleury was given the credit of having "discovered" him. Duranty is a third art critic honoured. The least important in the group are two artists to-day forgotten, Louis Cordier and Albert de Balleroy.

Whistler's interest was great from the moment he heard of the picture. His faith in Fantin made him a good, if perhaps a partial critic of everything Fantin did. But there can be no question that his interest was the greater because Fantin

reserved for him the centre of honour on the canvas. A straight, slight figure, not as yet a touch of grey in the black hair, he stands to one side of the Delacroix portrait, an offering of flowers in his hands. I never saw Whistler as he was then, but the Whistler who became my friend later on I recognize in the uprightness of the pose, the correctness of the well-fitting black coat, the abundance of the curly hair, the dignity of the face and expression—not the *personnage bizarre* of the Latin Quarter but the Whistler of the West Point tradition. Whatever the occasion he never failed to dress and act his part accordingly. Nor, once his enthusiasm was aroused, could he be content with half measures. His readiness to answer every call must have gone far to keep Fantin up to the mark. If he was needed, he would run over to Paris for a sitting despite his reluctance to leave his own work. Legros usually went with him. It is amusing to-day to note that Fantin not only put the little "Society of Three" into his

picture, but kept them together in it as they had not then ceased to be in their friendship. Whistler begged Fantin to make room for Rossetti, who, he said, had a splendid head and was a great artist. Fantin would love him. Whistler's affection for Rossetti endured, but not his admiration for Rossetti's art. The story remains—perhaps has been too often quoted—of Whistler's comment when Rossetti used the same motive for a picture and a sonnet: "Why not frame the sonnet?" In the first exuberance of youth Whistler was apt to see a swan in his every friend. London did not allow him to cherish his youthful illusions long. But in this case, though his admiration for the painter cooled, he retained his appreciation of the man. Summoned to Paris for sittings, Rossetti could not get off, which was his loss. He expressed regret, he would have loved to appear in Fantin's group. Perhaps it was well he could not. What had he, the Pre-Raphaelite, to do in that company, with that little band of worshippers or the master wor-

shipped? It would have been as inappropriate to include Swinburne, also proposed by some one, Whistler perhaps. Like Rossetti he failed when it was a question of sittings.

Rossetti eventually came to Paris, but too late to pose. Fantin, in forgiving mood, deserted easel and studio to take him everywhere—to the Louvre, to the Luxembourg, to see Manet, to see Courbet, to see the Delacroix Exhibition then being held. He could not do enough for Rossetti who had done so many things for him in London. Rossetti condescended to the French painter, was liberal with good advice. Fantin should finish his pictures, something which, according to Pre-Raphaelite standards, Fantin failed to do. To compare Millais' *Ophelia* or Holman Hunt's *Light of the World* to the *Hommage* is not to be surprised at Rossetti's criticism. Fantin accepted advice and criticism good-naturedly but showed no inclination to profit by it. "*On ne se refait pas*", was his comment to Edwin Edwards. And Ros-

setti's comment, in a letter to his brother William Michael, was that the *Hommage* "showed a great deal of very able painting in parts, but it is a great slovenly scrawl after all, like the rest of the incredible new School of to-day."

The *Hommage à Delacroix* amazed Whistler, so greatly had Fantin's art developed in so short a time. He could not forget the colour in Fantin's copies, in *The Marriage Feast at Cana* especially, so pure, so superb. In the *Hommage*, he found not colour alone, but a simplicity, a character he could not praise enough. He longed to look at it side by side with Fantin where it hung in the *Salon*, he was sure it must overshadow every other painting there. The truth is, it had no official success. The Hanging Committee, in a way Hanging Committees have, gave it a poor place in a poor light. The critics were condescending or severe. Fantin is revenged to-day. The *Hommage à Delacroix* hangs with the Moreau-Nélaton Collection in the Louvre.

The success, if not officially startling, proved an inspiration for further large paintings of the kind. Whistler, in London, caught the fever, planned a canvas to rival Fantin's in size, ten feet by six. Like Fantin's it would be a group of portraits, like Fantin's a tribute to Realism, true to the life of their day even as the great Haarlem groups were true to life as Franz Hals knew it. Whistler would introduce a note of gaiety, uncalled for in the solemn ceremony of the *Hommage*. The scene would be an every day meeting of painters and models in the studio, gathered there for no ulterior motive. Fantin, in the *Hommage*, if he did omit allegorical details, relieved the Arrangement in Black by the frame on the wall, the flowers in Whistler's hand, his own white blouse. Whistler's harmony was designed in a lighter key—white and rose in the draperies of Jo and *La Japonaise*, grey worn by himself, the one strong note reserved for the sombre attire of Albert Moore and Fantin. Albert Moore now

began to be a frequent visitor at No. 7, a new friend, the friendship rapidly strengthening, and a true friend to the last. The big picture unfortunately never got further than the sketch. Too much else claimed Whistler's attention and time. A suggestion of the beauty he might have created is in the lovely *Whistler in his Studio* owned by the Chicago Art Institute.

Fantin, however, not only planned but carried out other large groups. After the *Hommage* came the *Toast à la Vérité*, and this time allegory and studio properties got the better of him. The new group, clothed conventionally, was assembled in honour of Truth, represented on the canvas by an allegorical figure, nude with the nudeness appropriate to allegory, while Whistler, alone of the men with whom he posed, appeared in a costume of neither his own day nor world. These were the years when his love of blue-and-white held him in its grip; when the house in Lindsey Row overflowed with Japanese and Chinese hangings and

WHISTLER IN HIS STUDIO
Chicago Art Institute
Whistler's "beautiful study," never carried further, for a big picture like Fantin's *Hommage*

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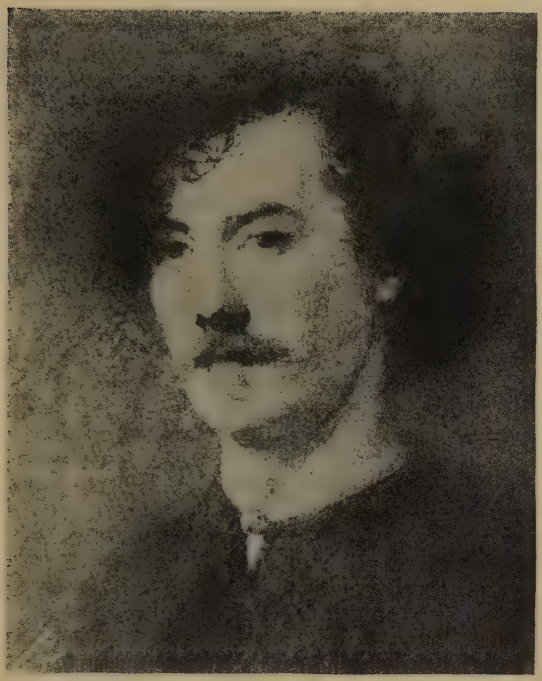
robes, screens and fans, pots and plates, and all things Oriental; when he was busy with his *Lange Leizen* and *Balcony*, his *Gold Screen* and *Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine*; and he begged Fantin to paint him in a Chinese robe of unusual beauty: "*Pense à la robe à faire, et donne la moi*", was his argument. Fantin, who called it a Japanese robe, showed no great enthusiasm. Here was a touch he no doubt felt, that must scream defiance to truth. But he consented and his matter-of-fact story later is: "*Je l'ai encore revu dans l'atelier en 1865, il me posa dans un tableau aujourdhui détruit, Le Toast, où il s'était costumé d'une robe Japonaise.*" The big canvas was exhibited in the *Salon* of 1865. The public laughed at it, the critics condemned it. They could not stand the combination of nudity unashamed and men decently covered as fashions and decorum required. Had Giorgione's *Concert* been hung in a *Salon* of the last half of the Nineteenth Century, the chances are it would have been laughed

at as heartily. Certainly Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* was a few years later, the laughter sobered by shocked propriety. Fantin had taken no great pleasure in painting the picture. "*Oh! que cela me fait du mal, l'anxiété de cette année, cette Exposition, ce travail effrayant à faire! Oh! que je suis fatigué! Enfin, c'est la fatalité*," he wailed to Edwin Edwards. Perhaps he toiled over it too long. Anyway, when he saw it at the *Salon* he could not stand it. The figure of Truth might not have got on his nerves. He never, throughout his life, cut himself entirely adrift from allegory. He might have borne with patience the foolish laughter of the public and the indignant cry of the critics against this appearance of naked truth at a table round which men were gathered to drink her health. I fancy that to Fantin, realizing the false note struck by his mistaken mixture of allegory and realism, the last straw was the incongruous effect of Whistler arrayed in fantastic dress posing in the midst of his contemporaries



WHISTLER, BY FANTIN-LATOUR
Head cut from the large painting, The Toast, destroyed
Freer Collection, National Museum, Washington

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clad in everyday clothes. He thought nothing in the painting better than this figure, partly because of the beauty of the out-of-place garment, partly because Whistler had been so willing to give the sittings required, so generous with his time, and so patient. But it was beauty in the wrong place. When the painting came back to the studio, Fantin destroyed it, all save three heads: Whistler's, Vollon's and his own. Whistler was deeply flattered and told Fantin so, adding that he hoped one day the portrait might go to America. His wish has been granted, though too late for him to know it. It is now in the Freer Gallery. No more distinguished portrait of Whistler at this period was painted and Fantin did well to preserve it for posterity.

The public showed no particular interest in Fantin's first big group, Fantin showed anything but pleasure in the second, the reason it may be that he was the more bent upon painting another, this time out-of-doors. It was to be a *Pique-*

Nique, and he was full of it for a while. Sunbury would be the background, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, Fantin and no doubt Whistler, the principal picnickers—"*Des figures en plein air sur le vert, comme on pourrait faire une belle chose*!" His enthusiasm, apparently, went no further than his letters about it to Edwards. A proposed portrait group of the Fitz-James family got as far as a sketch but was quickly abandoned, and no wonder. The family consisted of a grandmother, a daughter and fifteen grand-children of various ages, and the sketch naturally gives the idea not of an arrangement but of a crowd. However, three other big groups were finished and exhibited and survive. Manet is the hero of *Un Atelier aux Batignolles*; the painting that brought Fantin his first award at the *Salon*, a third-class medal which though he professed to attach no real value to this sort of "honour," he welcomed because of what other people thought and the much-needed advertisement. Art might be his

religion, his sole ideal, but, after all, he had to live—and so did his family. In *Autour du Piano*, Camille Benoit, the musician, fills the centre of interest. And Verlaine and Rimbaut make the *Coin de Table* forever memorable: Rimbaut in his beautiful youth, with ardent young face, eager eyes and thick crop of disordered hair; Verlaine, severe and dignified, with no sign in him as yet of the satyr I remember on his now historic visit to London when the lecture on Modern French Poets he came to deliver resolved itself into the reading of his own poems. I shrank from him then as I sat by him at a dinner the Henry Harlands gave the evening before his return to Paris —from the face disfigured by dissipation, from the skin like discoloured parchment, from his talk of the two women waiting his return to fall upon him and fight for the money in his pockets. That he ever looked as staid and decent as on Fantin's canvas makes my memory of him the more tragic.

If Whistler and Legros do not figure in these

three big groups painted after *The Toast*, it may have been because they were too busy by this time to run over to Paris for sittings when summoned. It may have been "*simplement manque d'argent*", that want of money which Whistler bemoaned in a letter to Fantin and was to bemoan from now onward. We have reason to be thankful that in the *Hommage*, at least, Fantin left his record of the "Society of Three" united on his canvas as they were in the first enthusiasm of their youth, but as they were not destined to remain very much longer.

VI

AMBITION, DESPAIR AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

VI

Ambition, Despair and Accomplishment

WHISTLER'S English contemporaries, if asked what Whistler was doing in the Sixties, would have answered "playing". Hardly had he settled in London before he began to be seen everywhere. He danced the night through at balls and parties. He was met at afternoon receptions. He patronized the theatre, rarely missed a first night, took part in private theatricals. He went to dinners and gave them. He startled London by invitations to midday Sunday breakfasts. His studio was always full of people. Work? Well, how could a man who never stopped playing, work? Where was the time left for work?

But they did not know their Whistler in those days. If he played hard, he worked harder. He did nothing by halves. He would have laughed to scorn the idea of gaiety as an enemy of art.

He could see no necessity for the artist to approach his easel with the long sanctimonious face of the Puritan preacher mounting the pulpit to denounce pleasure and laughter in a world of sin. From the beginning to the end he was firm in his belief that "Art and Joy go hand in hand", though it might not be roses, roses all the way to either. Here you have the doctrine upon which his creed was founded. If other artists failed to share it, the loss was theirs. They were mistaken, but he did not turn his back upon them for that reason. When he discovered what they thought of him, he laughed and, to all appearances, was gayer than ever, no matter how sad at heart when his accomplishment fell short of his ambition. Only the few were allowed a glimpse of the artist struggling with doubt and disappointment. And so the Legend of the Idle Apprentice, brought back by British Students from Paris, grew and grew until the suggestion that Whistler occasionally worked would have been taken as a joke.

The cream of the joke is that Whistler probably never worked harder, never was more engrossed in the problems of art, never was a more devoted student of "the science of colour", never more concerned in reducing it to an exact system, than during the Sixties when his reputation as an idler was confirmed, a reputation destined to endure until he drew his last breath, an old man worn out by work. And, as if to prove that it is always the busiest man who can make time for still more things to do, never were his letters to Fantin longer. He poured forth his soul in them, now exulting, now despairing. He was full of ideas for pictures, he would write, but to get them out of his head on canvas meant a ceaseless struggle, ceaseless agony. He was growing more exact, having travelled far from the days when he threw everything pell-mell upon the canvas in his conceited certainty that instinct and beautiful colour would carry him through. Not that he denied his natural gifts as a painter. They might have

carried him far had not fate brought him to Paris at just the wrong moment. He felt more and more the defects of his training, regretted more and more that his education had begun so late. To be sure, he had studied in the St. Petersburg Academy as a boy, attended drawing classes with the other cadets at West Point, learned in the Geodetic Office, Washington at least how to prepare a copper plate and to use an etching needle. But this was not the training to make an artist of a student. It was in the master's workshop, which the studio used to be, that the apprentice of old learned his trade and, by playing the Raphael to some Perugino, became the master in his turn. And Whistler could not help feeling that, when he got to Paris, he had not set about it there in the right way. Why, oh why? he kept asking, could he not have studied under Ingres? Not that he cared for Ingres' painting, but what a master! how sane! Upon the foundation of drawing he believed art should be built

up—a shockingly old-fashioned doctrine this, to the emancipated young genius of to-day. Drawing once conquered, the other essentials, the painter-like qualities followed as a matter of course. Gleyre, Whistler's master, had been Ingres' pupil. But that was not quite the same thing. And why, oh why? had he allowed himself to come under the influence of Courbet?—for him an altogether disgusting influence. On this point, as on so many others, the "Three" agreed. Fantin's paintings are proof of his revolt against the hero of his younger days. Legros was not slower than Whistler in transferring his allegiance from Courbet to Ingres.

Whistler willingly admitted the honesty and vigour of Courbet's work, willingly recognized his great achievements. Besides, Whistler flattered himself, he was much too personal really, too richly equipped by Nature as an artist to succumb to anyone's influence. It was the damned realism *ce sacré réalisme*—preached by Courbet that led

him astray, appealing to his vanity, convincing him that he had but to paint what was before him to produce the masterpiece. And what had come of this realism? Well, then, *The Piano Picture*, *The White Girl*, the Thames pictures, the seas—an uncommonly good record most people would say, but to him the mistakes of a good-for-nothing, puffed up with vanity, who thought the world his to conquer on canvas. He appreciated them better with the passing of the years but in the excitement of his escape from Courbet every suggestion of Realism was anathema. A sound education would have knocked the nonsense out of him, he believed. Unluckily his education, begun at an age when most students were finishing theirs, was so unsound that, his apprenticeship at an end, he had not merely to start out to learn over again, but to unlearn, a far more difficult task.

Hazlitt once wrote an essay on *The Pleasure of Painting*. An artist would more likely write on

COURBET'S PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF
"L'HOMME À LA CEINTURE DE CUIR"
Courbet before he became the Prophet of Realism
In the Louvre, Paris
By courtesy Les Archives Photographiques d'Art et d'Histoire

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the *Pain of Painting*. But Hazlitt was the amateur though he might have been an excellent painter had he exchanged literature for art. Only the amateur can afford to sit down and be happy, at peace, from the moment he sets up his easel out-of-doors and looks Nature in the face. The artist at work is more than satisfied with rare moments of peace and happiness, and thinks them worth the price he pays. Hazlitt's mind may have been calm when he dropped the pen and got out palette and brushes, but little calmness was in Whistler's. The agony and despair of his struggle is reflected in his letters to Fantin. In Fantin's to Edwin Edwards the refrain is "how I suffer!" One of the most human things I have read about Legros tells of his rage at the Slade School when the biting of a plate went wrong and he would stride about the class-room with cries of Damn! Damn! Damn! Nor is this agony of the "Three" a contradiction to Whistler's belief that Joy and Art go hand in hand. He knew, none better, what toiling

there is and bitter striving before the art is created and the joy achieved. The artist, of all men, truly wins Heaven in anguish of spirit and by the sweat of his brow.

In the Sixties, when supposed to be idling, Whistler was giving himself the education he missed in Paris, wrestling with the serious drawbacks of his training, developing scientifically his theory of colour, working out his scheme in *The White Girl*, *The Little White Girl* and *The Two Little White Girls*: symphonies he called them, and they are anything rather than faithful copies of Nature as interpreted by Courbet. This was the period too of Whistler's Japanese series, deliberate arrangements of colour, as the poles apart from *Bon Jour Monsieur Courbet* and *The Funeral at Ornans*. He was learning many things from the Japanese, was struck above all by the fact, to which he called Fantin's attention, that they never aimed at contrast in their work but, on the contrary, obtained their effect by repeti-

tion. It was by repeating the colours in a painting, letting them appear and re-appear throughout the composition according to their importance, even as the same threads are repeated in a piece of tapestry, that real colour and a harmonious pattern can be obtained. When I came to that passage I was fairly stunned by his success in carrying out his theory on canvas. For I remembered the excitement of Joseph Pennell when, after long study of the portrait of Miss Alexander, he discovered for himself, and wrote down almost in Whistler's words which he had never read, that the green and gold in it bind the arrangement together and are so wonderfully used, like the threads in a tapestry, that one does not see them but feels the results. To my knowledge he had never heard of this theory of Whistler's early years. In his most despairing, as in his most rebellious moments, Whistler never belittled Courbet, never ceased to recognize in him the master, never underrated his valiant leadership in the war against Romanti-

cism. Whistler, without a trace of the missionary in him, concerned himself with the science of colour, with getting all the beauty he could on his canvas; and he found that, once to succumb to Courbet the Prophet of Realism, it was the very devil to escape. He had no other quarrel with the Master of Ornans.

He saw his way of escape through hard study and ceaseless work. He was not an Impressionist as critics have mistakenly called him. He learned his lesson that summer at Guéthary, learned that little save the hasty sketch could be achieved by sitting face to face with his subject in all lights and under ever-changing effects. The laws of composition must always yield him more beauty that a crude bit of Nature captured in haste. He came nearer than he dared hope to his goal in the third *Symphony in White*. Nothing might look simpler than the pose of the two girls, but this simplicity was due to the elaborately thought-out arrangement not simply of colour but of line. Well satis-

SYMPHONY IN WHITE, NO. III. WHISTLER
The reclining figure on the couch is Jo
In the possession of Edmund Davis, Esq.

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fied with it, he made a little sketch in a letter to Fantin to show how the arms of the two girls carried out the lines of the composition; longed for him to see the canvas itself since the colour, the arrangement of white, could not be expressed in pen-and-ink; would give anything for Fantin's approval and criticism, of more value than any other man's to his hoping and despairing friend.

To-day, not only because Whistler has explained but because artists better understand what he was striving for, the bewilderment of his contemporaries when they saw this painting at the Royal Academy in 1867 is more incomprehensible than ever. It incensed Hamerton, who in his day ranked only second to Ruskin as art critic. He did not call Whistler names with Ruskin's recklessness in front of *The Falling Rocket*, but wrote of the Third Symphony with the naïveté of that Victorian scapegoat, "the man in the street". He pointed to the notes of colour in a gown, a fan, a bit of ribbon, a few flowers; he

called attention to the brown hair of one girl, the reddish hair of the other, to prove that Whistler's palette was not limited to white. How then, he asked, could the picture be precisely a Symphony in White? Whistler's answer has not been quoted as often as many Whistler letters, but none bears repetition better. The criticism infuriated him by its sheer stupidity. "*Bon Dieu!*" he wrote in his turn, "did this wise person expect white hair and chalked faces? And does he then, in his astounding consequence, believe that a symphony in F contains no other note, but should be a continued repetition of F F F? . . . Fool." And so great was the British respect for the British critic that, though Hamerton's criticism appeared in *The Saturday Review* at the time, not until twenty years later did Whistler's letter get into print, and then it was he who arranged for its publication.

An interruption came to the correspondence with Fantin in the Sixties just when I could wish

it had been most vigorous and full. 1866 was the year of the Valparaiso adventure for which no credible explanation has yet been given. Whistler, who travelled less than most men, took this long and then hardly luxurious journey apparently without rhyme or reason. It could hardly have been to paint his beautiful Nocturne *Blue and Gold, Valparaiso Bay*, for how could he know what subjects, if any, he would find in Chile? I doubt if it could have been to help the Chileans to rebel, his vague suggestion to Joseph Pennell and myself, for he had not gone home to help his own people in their rebellion. To the South his mother had spared one son, Dr. Whistler, who was a surgeon in the Confederate Army, and to Whistler's mind anyway, that sort of fighting was not the artist's business. Nor do I think the journey was the outcome of a sudden fancy, a mere whim. Proof exists of the seriousness with which he prepared for it, the Catalogue of the Anderson Rose documents throwing unexpected

light upon the episode by printing the will—a most careful will—made by Whistler before he started. In it everything, in case of his death, was left to Jo, Joanna Hiffernan—so the will spells the name. A Power of Attorney was given to her together with the right to draw on his bank, the Bank of London. Had he foreseen no risks, no delays, no interference, would he have taken the journey so seriously, provided with such care for Jo? The adventure remains a mystery despite Catalogue and will, and at the time apparently was kept a secret from Fantin.

If Whistler did not write about it to Legros, that is not surprising. He may, but no such letters have been heard of and, so far as I know, no letters from Whistler to Legros have been quoted or published. Their correspondence, if they did correspond, must have been slight. What need for any while both were in Paris, and what need in London where the visits of Legros were longer and longer until he ceased to be a visitor

to become a resident. His naturalization occasioned his one and only witticism on record, despite his reputation for Burgundian wit. When asked why he became an Englishman, his answer was: "*Tiens*! by becoming an Englishman I have won the Battle of Waterloo!" But biographers suggest other reasons. One or two have pointed out that because, from his boyhood onward he was never without some sort of work, therefore it is foolish to deplore his poverty. But during his student days in Paris even Ingres thought it a pity a young man with such excellent qualities should be in such a bad way. And Whistler gave as a reason for bringing him to London his deplorable condition out of which it needed God, or a lesser person—like Whistler—to pull him out. Worse still, a French citizen is held responsible for whatever debts his parents may leave behind them when they die. Legros, after his father's death, could not face these debts. Even supported by the guineas of the patrons Whistler promised

him in England, he could not at first always make two ends meet. The one way he saw out of the difficulty was, no doubt, to become a British subject.

With this new nationality his troubles were not altogether at an end, and sometimes the struggle for life alone must have been enough to turn him into almost as confirmed a hermit as Fantin became towards the last. And, indeed, he lived a fairly retired life. Even after he had made his reputation as painter and etcher he, personally, was seldom seen or heard of by the public. In the Sixties, however, a friend of Whistler's could not remain entirely obscure. Legros, staying with Haden or Whistler, got to know, among others, the Greeks, those wonderful Greeks the story of whose conquest of London should one day be told. Ionides, Coronis, Spartali, Manuel were for long familiar names to artists whom they patronized with lavishness and intelligence. Aleco Ionides was a student of no one knew

exactly what in Paris when Whistler startled the Quarter, and the Leighton-Du Maurier faction disapproved. The friendship continued when they came to London and, as the Greeks were mostly people of wealth, the buying of pictures followed as a matter of course. They bought Whistler, they bought Fantin—many of those bunches of flowers and arrangements of fruit which he thought mere pot-boilers—they bought Legros. In their generosity, they would take the pictures down from their walls to send them for exhibition in the year's Academy. Here, indeed, were art patrons of the right sort, art patrons who used their own judgment and bought pictures, not for investment, but for their pleasure. And they showed a true critical appreciation in their purchases as can be seen in the Ionides Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum. When Dr. Whistler, Whistler's brother, married Helen Ionides, the intimacy strengthened. Probably all these families are fast becoming too English to

remember their Greek origin—another reason why their history as a little colony of art-loving foreigners in the midst of British Philistines should be written before it is too late.

Legros, when summer came, would stay with his Ionides friends in the country. Occasionally, no doubt, he would run over to Paris—when he had the money and before a dead father's debts called for payment. And Whistler would report to Fantin his picturesque appearance on his unexpected return to Lindsey Row, quite the tenor from the operatic stage, *sombrero* set jauntily on his head, cloak thrown over his shoulder, nothing save the village chorus lacking to complete the picture. London, a wet blanket to this operatic pose, restored him to the correct clothes of fashion, his leisure hours now spent at the tailor's, came the next report. The little laugh at Legros still struck a note of tenderness, and Whistler still continued to exert what influence he had, which was not much, to get Legros into the

Academy and, once there, well placed. Upon one Academic friend he could rely: Boxall, the Royal Academician who, later on, when the characteristic British jury would have fired the portrait of *The Mother*, threatened to resign unless it was hung. As *notre vieux peintre*, Whistler affectionately referred to him. And Whistler, in London, supporting the interest of his two friends, often declared to Fantin that the "Society of Three" was stronger than ever, the bonds unloosened by time and distance. Let the "Three" but remain faithful, one to the other, and gold waited for them everywhere, and gold was the symbol of success.

It amuses me to contrast the Whistler his contemporaries saw in him to the Whistler his friends loved and appreciated. Remembering the "Why drag in Velasquez?" story, few probably will believe how unstinted was not solely Whistler's endeavour to smooth the financial path of Fantin and Legros, but his praise—discriminating praise

of their pictures. He rejoiced to "drag in" any artist he thought an artist and his praise savoured neither of froth nor condescension. Criticism went with it. He cared enough to tell the truth. His problems held little in common with the problems of Legros—the "classic-romantic artist" is "Bob" Stevenson's description—which is more exact than the "Realist," the word found for him by Frederick Wedmore who was not unknown to follow the wrong lead in matters of art. Nor were the problems of Fantin—interpreter in paint of Berlioz, Wagner and Schumann—those of Whistler. But the difference could not lessen his interest in the standards of beauty upheld by his friends and in their methods of interpreting it. Whether *L'Ex Voto* by Legros was in question or a flower picture by Fantin, he was sympathetic in his appreciation, outspoken in expressing it: From no other episode in Whistler's life is as true an insight into his character to be had as from this friendship of the "Society of Three" and his unfailing loyalty as long as it lasted.

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VII

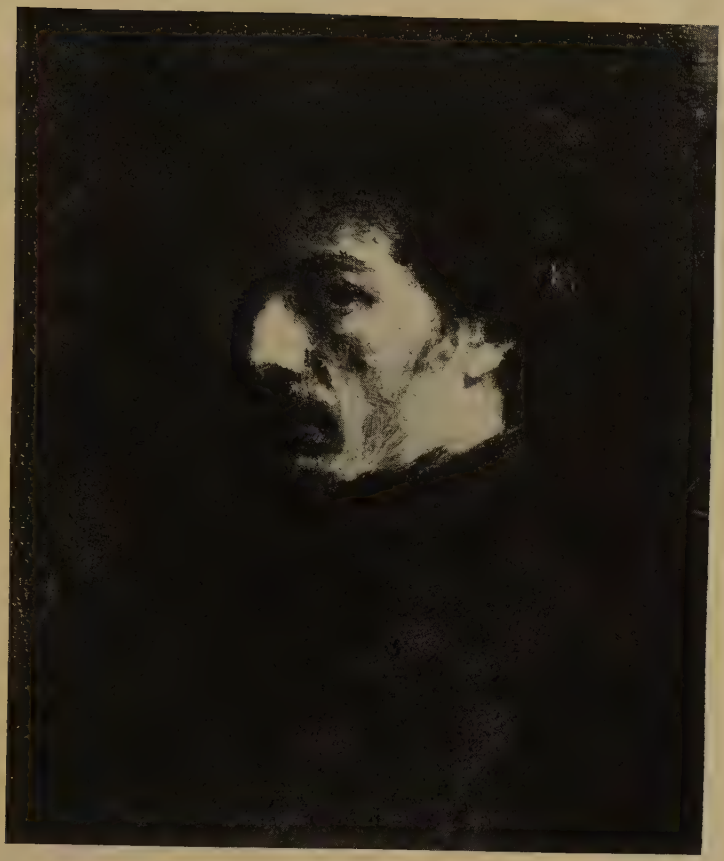
THE LITTLE RIFT

VII

The Little Rift

FRIENDSHIP, unfortunately, like love, sometimes has an end. When Whistler and Legros fell out I cannot but think the fault lay largely with Legros. Whistler came legitimately by his reputation as master of the Gentle Art of Making Enemies. But he never made them unless he had reason for it. At first new friends may have lured Legros to new interests and Whistler's backing could be dispensed with. Whatever the cause, certainly by the mid-Sixties, Whistler was seeing less of Legros and losing interest in his work. Not that he ceased to look at it and to praise it when he could. But he missed in it the earlier inspiration, was conscious of a growing tendency to the studio-built story, the Old Master pose, had his malicious little smile for its affectations, quick to let Fantin hear of

the bearded old Greek patron masquerading as the father in the picture of *The Prodigal Son* instead of sitting frankly as himself. He feared that Legros was becoming something of *un Vieillard*, and went so far as to pronounce his art beyond hope. Clearly the tie between the two old friends was weakening long before the crisis. Whistler, when roused, could fight with his fists as readily as with his tongue and at last an unusually heated encounter ended in blows, not easily forgiven by Legros, not easily forgotten by Whistler. The reason for it I know and could give if I belonged to the present school of biographers. But my generation prized reticence as a virtue and I cannot shake off the no doubt foolish fastidiousness of the Victorian era in which it was my luck, or my misfortune, to be born. However, the important fact is that the break was final. Whistler had no use for the kind of fighter who fights to-day and shakes hands to-morrow. And Legros avoided Whistler's friends as well as Whistler. After the



EARLY PORTRAIT OF LEGROS BY FANTIN-LATOUR
By courtesy Syndicat de la Propriété Artistique, Paris

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quarrel, he was seen no more at Rossetti's, fearful no doubt of meeting Whistler there. Rumour had it that Edwin Edwards' interest too was waning. And Mrs. Edwards could laugh at the precipitate flight of Legros from the Academy when he caught a glimpse of Whistler in the crowd. Legros was evidently unreasonable and inclined to think that Fantin's friendship should not be divided between himself and Whistler.

The loss of Legros drew Whistler closer to Fantin. An eloquent little paragraph quoted by one of Fantin's biographers, reveals the depth of Whistler's friendship. Apparently, a Whistler-Fantin Exhibition had been proposed. *"Tu dois supposer combien ça me va"*, Whistler wrote—and his French would lose by translation. *"Ta lettre m'a fait vrai plaisir. Au fond nous deux nous prenons le devant—c'est comme aux grandes courses—comme au Derby—c'est le pur sang qui gagne. Je crois que nous pouvons maintenant en être sûr—le champ est à nous—Alphonse reste*

déjà en arrière." After this, the end followed quickly.

Alphonse had strayed far from the path chosen by Whistler and Fantin. They believed that the artist and his work belonged to the period in which he lived. Legros believed in a return to the past, not to stray beyond safe pastures. With time the shadow of the Old Masters hung heavier over his paintings and etchings, as though he feared to be himself, to tackle his own problems. This was something Whistler and Fantin could not understand, they were as essentially personal, as modern —in the sense given to the word before the so-called Modernists appropriated it. Fantin ventured further and further into the land of romance and imagination but simply because the music he loved, music no less modern than himself, led him there. The inspiration was not borrowed from any Old Master, nor were the terms in which he expressed himself on his canvas. In my opinion, his excursions into that land of *Féerie*

he haunted cannot rival his first portraits, but at least they are equally original, equally personal. Fantin and Whistler would probably have lost sympathy with Legros because of their increasing difference in aims and methods, even had there been no definite quarrel. Nor did another new undertaking on the side of Legros bring him any closer. Success did not desert him, he could sell his paintings and prints. But in the sale was always an element of uncertainty. His bitter struggle, at the start, possibly left him with fears of finding himself penniless. In the Seventies, when asked to run the Class of Engraving at South Kensington and offered the Slade Professorship at University College, he accepted both positions. If some of his students thought he made a poor teacher, others believed in him and therefore learned much from him. His influence left its mark on the work of two of his most successful pupils, Strang and Holroyd. For long years he retained the Professorship, well content, his am-

bition satisfied, though now, between professing and painting not much time could be spared for friends.

The "Society of Three" was not disbanded because of the loss of Legros. An Englishman filled his place; Albert Moore, whose reputation barely outlived him, but who was a good, though not a great, painter and, in addition, what Whistler called a good fellow. Moreover, theories did not trouble him nor stories supply his subjects. He scorned the pose of reformer, he disdained sentiment, he never sought to save the world by moral tales told in paint. Like Whistler, like Fantin, he knew no aim save to do good work. At a glance one might find some kinship between his pictures and the Pre-Raphaelites', or more particularly Rossetti's. But no moral or mystical meaning oppressed his women in their classic draperies. They served none but a decorative purpose. At one time critics, who grudged Whistler credit for any originality, discovered in his Symphonies and

PORTRAIT OF LEGROS
From the Drypoint by William Strang, R. A.
By permission of The Fine Art Society, Ltd., London

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Harmonies the influence of Moore. It would be truer to say that Moore was influenced by Whistler, though the two painters really differed in everything save their sincerity. Some day Albert Moore's now neglected decorative panels may come into their own again. When you have seen one, however, you have seen them all. Variety was not his virtue. But feeling for beauty never failed him the reason why, despite the monotony, they stood out with distinction year after year in the midst of the Royal Academy's unlovely story-telling. I remember the relief it was to stumble upon them in the mass of cheap anecdote and cheaper sentiment. Whistler liked him, thought it would be charming to have him as Third in the "Society of Three," thus uniting Russia, England and America in the great task of carrying on tradition and upholding the right standard.

Whatever the changes in the little Society, whatever new friends Whistler made, no artist could usurp Fantin's place in his esteem and

love. He found no one else in Paris, in London, in all Europe, so sympathetic, and, as he liked to remind Fantin of the fact, no one else for whom his affection was so great. He liked also to think they were necessary one to the other for the true sympathy, the entire confidence not to be had from any artist outside their own beloved little circle. He was as proud of Fantin's success as of his own; always prompt to report the approval of their *vieux peintre*, Boxall; in haste to deliver the order for another study of flowers; rejoicing in Fantin's growing English fame and each new triumph at the *Salon*. Whistler's friendship proved inexhaustible so long as friends did not take advantage of it. He did nothing by halves.

Distance tempered, if not the friendship, at least the expression of it. Whistler, breaking his heart over the problems he set himself, gradually working out new schemes for his *Nocturnes*, found less and less leisure for letter-writing.

Sometimes a couple of months passed before

one letter was finished. He would now think twice before running over to Paris in the old fashion, a fact which makes that inexplicable journey to Valparaiso more of a mystery than ever. His days were spent in a fury of work. He would rather be late for the formal dinner than tear himself from his studio just when things were going as they should, or he would refuse to go at all. Then, when people began to talk, as they talked about everything he did or did not do, he fell into the habit of being late, amused at the talk and the scandal and the horror of correct Britons. Other interruptions not so easily disposed of harassed him. The sun set too soon, he complained to Fantin, and some one would drop into the studio in the late afternoon and stay on to dine with him. The open door he cultivated was not without its drawbacks. What between his art, which kept him a close prisoner, and his gaiety, which made people at home or abroad indispensable, he did not know what leisure meant.

Fantin, on his side, also became more absorbed in work, in his case not even gaiety allowed to interfere with it. To the Sixties and the early Seventies belong the finest of his fine portrait groups, all save one—a rich harvest, most artists would say, to have reaped in so short a period. But the other portraits were numerous, beautiful, tender portraits of his family; the *Manet*, so talked about, so damned and praised, attracting so many commissions; the *Madame Manet*; too many to make a list of. His fame was confirmed beyond doubt of hesitation. He no longer relied upon family and friends for sitters. Whistler heard of the prominent people, the distinguished people, the people with titles ready to sit to him, and one did not have to be a snob to realize that a portrait painter could have no better sort of advertisement. Where Countesses and Duchesses led, there the common herd would follow like sheep. But Whistler, watching from a distance, could also see that Fantin, with or without com-

missions, was fast developing the hermit tendency that was his, until little could drag him from his studio except the *Café Molière* and the good talk to be heard there. Finally, the Café lost its charm and the talk its zest; they disgusted him, these artists who were not artists, these painters who never thought, who said nothing, their joyous anticipation and enthusiasm of younger days exchanged for the harsh experience of men in the thick of the battle. *"Des cancans, c'est là tout,"* was his verdict. Everything worth while was in the studio, everything outside of it but lies and horrible illusion. On the other hand, society stimulated Whistler to the end. The joy of life staled unless people surrounded him and shared it. Naturally, he fancied that Fantin would profit by the same stimulant. But one man's meat is another man's poison and Fantin, shrinking into himself, seeing fewer people, gradually settled down to a seclusion that was confirmed by his marriage to Mlle. Victoria Dubourg in the Seven-

ties. She never ceased to be the faithful companion, and her company sufficed.

In 1868 he had moved into the studio No. 8 *Rue des Beaux-Arts*, never to move out of it during the rest of his life. He loved it, loved the quiet and the solitude. Like Whistler, he was not merely engrossed in the problems of painting but breaking his heart over his all but insuperable difficulties and wearing himself out in the effort to conquer them. He might wonder in a letter to Edwin Edwards that Whistler was so preoccupied with the question "received or not received?" at the *Salon* and the Royal Academy. It was a weakness, in his opinion, that should be left to *men*, not to *artists* like themselves. But when it was a question of his own bad luck, his philosophy curiously failed. The rejection of his paintings at the *Salon* drove him into the deepest despondency, nor did he suffer less if, when accepted, they were skied so that it seemed merely out of pity they were hung at all. The award of

a Third Medal meant to him overwhelming discouragement, though, at least, it would spare him the humiliation in future of being tried by the *Salon* jury, too often incompetent or prejudiced. He would have done well to try Whistler's cure and dose himself with gaiety and people; alone he brooded. Those credulous young men and women who yearn to be artists because studio life is so picturesque and easy would quickly learn their mistake were they to read the lives of artists who have lived the real, the tragic life of the studio and paid the price in endless sorrow and struggle. Added to his own burden, Fantin was heavy-laden with the troubles of his family, his father old and ill, money scarce, his sister always at Charenton, bills mounting up for him to pay. Once, when Edwin Edwards virtually cleared Fantin's studio of all the *"Bouquets,"* all the *Natures Mortes* to be found there, Fantin was already five quarters in arrears with his father's rent and groaning under a bigger account from

the asylum. Circumstances gave him small chance to cultivate the social talents with which Nature had not endowed him.

When the new third member was welcomed to the "Society of Three," the first fine fervour of their youth was waning. The hopeful interval of apprenticeship was at an end, exchanged for the stern business of living. Whistler counted on Albert Moore's sympathy so fully as often to take him along in the Greaves's boat on the Thames when the *Nocturnes* were in progress. And he often asked Moore to his famous dinners and breakfasts, often met him at a little Italian restaurant—Pagani's, I believe, in its primitive phase—where Pellegrini, the caricaturist, and a few other kindred spirits gathered together for endless talk in the manner of the old student days at the *Café Molière*. Moore's devotion continued unshaken through thick and thin. If Whistler needed him, he was ready to fight Whistler's bat-

tles, as in the great *Whistler v. Ruskin* encounter. Most of Whistler's so-called friends hedged, drew back. But not Albert Moore. In court, as witness, he bore testimony to Whistler's genius when few men dared to whisper it lest ridicule be their portion. He declared Whistler's painting "beautiful," *The Falling Rocket* "marvellous," "consummate art," never wavered in the face of the jibes and jeers of both court and public. And Whistler loved him for it, to the end spoke of him with loyalty and affection.

Whistler, through the Seventies, was absorbed in his *Nocturnes*; painting some of his greatest portraits; evolving new schemes; decorating the Peacock Room; seeing much of the Leylands, often leaving London to stay with them at Speke Hall on the Lancashire coast; building a house; fighting out his battle with Ruskin in the law courts; threatened by the bankruptcy with which the decade ended. The old intimacy of the "So-

ciety of Three," with its interchange of confidences, of hopes and fears, could but languish under such a strain. The "Three" had reached the middle years when action, if action there is to be, takes the place of building castles in the air and tearing them down again. Whistler's power of friendship was not exhausted; the chances for its active expression were fewer—that was all.

Whistler's last letter in his once exuberant correspondence with Fantin, as far as I know, was written in 1871 from Speke Hall, the Leylands' house by the sea: a short letter suggesting desperate hurry, but in that hurry pausing to assure Fantin once again of his love. Life had become quite too busy an occupation to spare pages for an assurance of friendship when, after all, it could be put into the few words the true friend would understand and welcome. One later letter is in the packet, not to Fantin however, but to Mrs. Edwards about a painting left with him by Fantin

years before. Whistler thought it a gift, but was ready to part with it if, by so doing, he could be of service to the friend for whose success he had so long striven.

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VIII
THE END

VIII

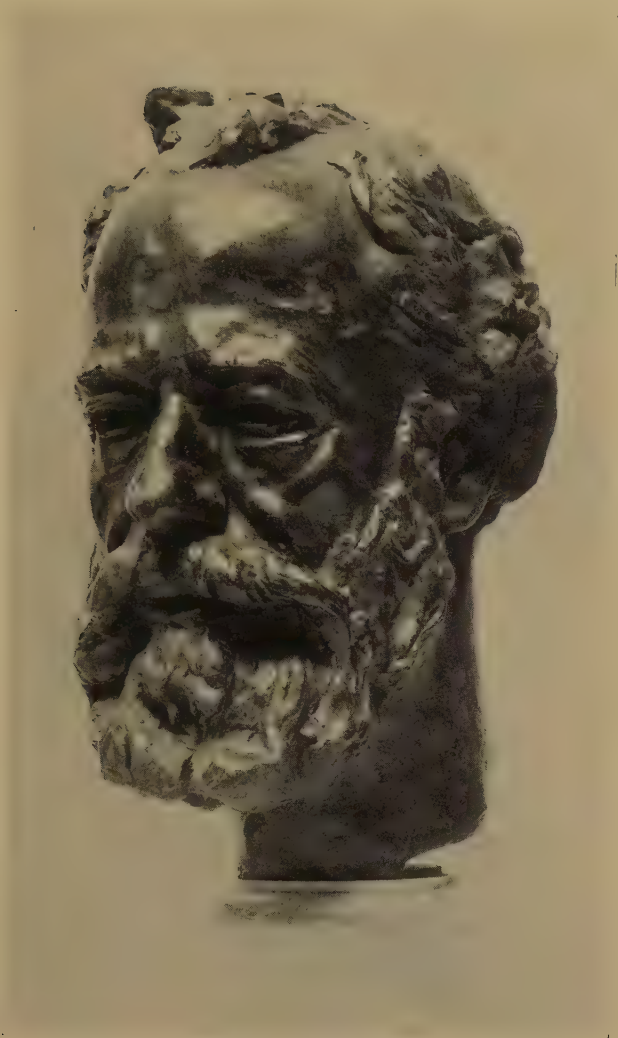
The End

THE years passed: middle age overtook the "Society of Three" and, when middle age arrives, old age lurks just round the corner. Each of the "Three" was engrossed in living his own life—as Ibsen taught us to say in the Nineties—each after the fashion which his natural temperament and circumstances had conspired to shape it.

Legros, from the beginning, long before he ceased to be one of the "Three", was evidently without any desire for publicity. He kept very much to himself. During the many years of my work in London galleries and studios I never met him. Not that, as artist, he was not in evidence. His paintings and his etchings were too distinct in character to be passed by, though that character was obviously borrowed from the Old Masters. They were often exhibited. He was one of the chosen at Van Wisselingh's gallery in Brook

Street where only the elect of the first water were admitted and, though artist and dealer may not often agree as to who the elect are, Van Wisselingh made uncommonly few mistakes so that to be exhibited by him was looked upon as an honour. Then, I often heard of Legros himself from the enthusiasts in his class. And it interests me to recall the fact that it was when staying in his house, Rodin, a friend of early student and *Café Molière* days, produced the fine bust of him and first saw Henley. Struck by the nobility of Henley's head, Rodin later on asked him to pose for the bust, a replica of which can now be seen by Henley lovers in the crypt of St. Paul's. No doubt to young students and old friends alike, Legros seemed a man of considerable importance. The outer world, however, knew and knows as little of him as of Fantin if not less.

Albert Moore, in later days the third in the "Society of Three," rivalled Legros and Fantin as hermit with the passing of the years. His tend-



BUST OF ALPHONSE LEGROS
BY AUGUSTE RODIN
The Rodin Museum, courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, Philadelphia

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ency always leaned that way and gradually he withdrew further and further into his cell, or studio, until at the end he was seldom seen by the world save in the yearly re-appearance of his work at the Academy.

Fantin's preference for the hermit life strengthened with age and he found his studio pleasanter than ever after *Madame* Fantin came to share it. Not even the chance of listening again to Courbet holding forth in his big voice or Manet fulminating against official juries could have lured him, as of old, to the *Café*. Of his early years his biographer, Adolphe Jullien, scraped together not over-much to tell; of his later years next to nothing.

On the other hand, middle-age tossed Whistler this way and that in a whirlpool of work, caught him up in an unescapable round of gaiety, business affairs, lawsuits, bankruptcy. His affection for Fantin and Albert Moore knew no change, but eventually circumstances sent him

far, far out of their chosen paths, until Albert Moore disappeared from his horizon, and, though he settled again in Paris in the early Nineties, intimate relations with Fantin were not easily resumed.

Some say the affection between the two old friends wavered, if it had not ceased. Frederick Keppel remembered Fantin's refusal to accept a print by Whistler, giving as reason his unwillingness to keep the work of a man he could no longer respect. Another story, said to come from Fantin, is of Whistler's sudden visit to the studio, bringing a lady with him, his casual nod to Fantin, his search on the walls for a portrait of himself, his pointing it out to his companion, his immediate departure with another nod and an abrupt "*Adieu*" to Fantin. Without strong proof I should doubt this story. Whistler reserved his rudeness for his "enemies." To others, courtesy was his rule. Many rumours probably reached Fantin during the years when the two friends

seldom met, and Whistler rumours at that period were mostly of Whistler eccentricities and Whistler affectations. Tales no doubt were repeated to Fantin of the break with Maud, London gossip by no means toned down on its flight to Paris. I know from *Madame* Fantin that when it reached the *Rue des Beaux-Arts*, Fantin thought Maud a badly treated woman. However, Fantin's affection survived the worst gossip and the longest silence. Once, in an interval of not hearing from Whistler, he made his profession of love for Whistler in a letter to Edwin Edwards. It was like the love of a man for his mistress, who was still loved despite the trouble she might give, he wrote. He did not understand women, they frightened him—and the rest is so much stronger, so much more illuminating in French that I shall not translate it: *mais au fond, tout au fond, je sens que si j'étais aimé, je serais l'esclave le plus soumis et serais peut-être capable de toutes les plus grandes folies. Je sens que c'est la même chose*

pour Whistler; s'il savait comme il pourrait avoir un ami dévoué et aimant en moi. Malgré tout, il est séduisant. But in these later days when he met Whistler face to face, the charm did not work so well. Whistler seemed to him very American, very amiable, but—well, somehow, Fantin did not feel so amiable himself. His old friend thought too much of money, society, excitement, he protested.

Had Whistler lived in Paris during his severest seasons of storm and stress, Fantin no doubt would have sympathized, would have understood better that, whatever the follies charged against Whistler, almost always some good reason justified them, if, indeed, they were not exaggerated out of all recognition. The noise of battle in London studios and galleries, however, was long on its journey to Fantin's quiet corner in the quiet *Rue des Beaux-Arts*—so long that the moment for the word of friendly advice and understanding had passed. Whistler, I fancy,

missed the sympathy that had helped and meant so much to him in earlier years.

The two friends saw hardly more of each other when, early in the Nineties, Whistler returned to Paris and settled in the *Rue du Bac*. This was inevitable. At one period Fantin replaced the old *Café* evenings by Monday evenings at home, where he had not merely his studio, but an apartment above reached by a narrow flight of stairs. The friends he cared for and gathered round him liked to recall afterwards the good dinners and good talk. But gradually the Monday evenings were abandoned and he seldom stirred beyond his front door. His whole life in his old age was in the studio. Thédore Duret thought he never would have set foot out of it had not his appetite been insatiable for a certain Camembert cheese sold in a shop far from the *Rue des Beaux-Arts*. His pursuit of it dragged him into the street for a long walk in the late afternoon, varied only when a desire as strong for a certain cake took

him as far in another direction to the one *patisserie* where it was made. For Fantin was something of a *gourmet*, a human touch in him which I applaud. Otherwise, he would seem more than ever like an old hoary monk praying and fasting and making himself uncomfortable in the desert, than an artist working in the very centre of the art life of Paris. Guiltless of his craving for cheese and cake, no exercise might have broken his sedentary life. I am glad his guests appreciated this passion, and they did. Jullien is lyrical as he recalls the Stilton and Chester and Gorgonzola as well as the Camembert—Fantin's fragrant symphony of cheese.

Whistler, for his part, kept as wide an open door in the *Rue du Bac* as of old in Lindsey Row, or the White House, or Tite Street. During the week his studio in the *Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs* claimed him. But on Sundays the blue door of the beautiful apartment, at the far end of the old courtyard was seldom closed to

Braun, Photo.

EARLY PORTRAIT OF FANTIN-LATOUR BY HIMSELF IN THE WHITE BLOUSE HE THEN USED TO WEAR WHEN AT WORK

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the world of Paris or to stray friends from across the Channel and the Atlantic. I feel now, more than I felt at the time perhaps, the privilege it was to be welcomed to his Sunday breakfasts, one of the gay company at the long table with its blue-and-white, its excellent *menu*, its good wine, above all with Whistler presiding, talking as only he could talk and giving to his historic "Ha! Ha!" a friendliness undreamed of by the outside world. As I have said, I was seldom in Paris except during spring or, exceptionally, summer, and I remember after breakfast another open door, the drawing-room door, giving the company the freedom of the garden with its cool shade of trees and the solemn chanting of monks on the other side of the high wall. I recall no great crowds like those I have heard of in the Chelsea days. I often wondered not to see more artists of his own generation. Of the younger Frenchmen who came to pay their homage. I recall more especially Aman-Jean, striking be-

cause he looked so as the painter of his pale shadowy ladies should, himself shadowy and languid, a graceful figure. And, among literary men, I recall Rodenbach, more solid and alive than might have been expected of the author of *Bruges-la-Morte*, his much talked of book then only recently published. And I have memories of Guthrie and Lavery from London, as correct in their frock coats and top hats as in their devotion, by this correctness of costume and demeanour expressing, I used to think, the Glasgow School's deferential allegiance to the Master. And Beardsley sometimes came, a tall, slim figure in grey. And D. S. MacColl, the art critic, not yet the curator. And Abbey and Mrs. Abbey, both good friends. But there were far too many more to count. The talk in the garden I thought a trifle subdued, the visit no doubt something of a ceremony to the more youthful visitors. The years had made a *cher maître* of the once much-feared collector of scalps, the new generation meeting him

with a respect not so willingly cultivated by his contemporaries.

To the least observant the wide gulf separating the *Rue du Bac* garden from the *Rue des Beaux-Arts* studio must be obvious. Fantin would not have been at home in that cool pleasant garden where Whistler was seldom alone. Some say that during these years Fantin saw Whistler but once and then by chance—a meeting in the Exhibition of 1900. Others insist that Whistler visited the *Rue des Beaux-Arts* often. Certainly, *Madame* Fantin spoke to me as if his visits were frequent, but frequency would have had a different significance for these two hermits than it would for most people. More likely the meetings between the two friends, who had lived so long apart, were comparatively few. With the best will in the world they could not easily gather up again the broken threads of the old friendship. Love survived, and allegiance, but hardly intimacy.

Interests, as well as their manner of life, sepa-

rated them. Fantin loved the art of the musician almost as much as his own. Whistler cared little for music, too little for him to study and master it in Fantin's fashion. Fantin was inspired by the composers in Berlioz, Wagner, Schumann, made their music the theme of his paintings and lithographs, interpreting one art in the terms of the other. Whistler could be impressed by a musician, and he was by Sarasate, but by Sarasate the picturesque figure to paint, not Sarasate the violinist. And Whistler understood the "science" of music so well as to believe that the painter equally with the musician was equipped to compose symphonies, harmonies and *scherzos* in his own medium. Emotions, inspiration might be virtually the same for all the arts, but each had its special medium of expression. Fantin's absorption in music increased until in the end he sought in it almost all his subjects. At the Old *Salon* every year, I knew beforehand how the two small Fantins would face each other from the corners of

one of the smaller galleries, what their subject would be, and how treated. I dreaded their monotony, hardly looked at them towards the end of my long career as art critic, certain that I could write about both with ease as well as if I stopped to study the detail in each; just as I could about the two Pointelins or the two Harpignies or the two of any other among the older men of whom formula had got the better—formula that Bob Stevenson used to say was bound to kill originality. Whistler's love of the life about him survived to the end, the places and the people he knew were his subjects; they, and not music, supplied him with the harmonies he sought to play with his brush, his pencil, his etching needle. His interest in music, however, went little further. I can see him, as I write, keeping time with his neatly-shod little foot to the arrangements of *Offenbach* played by the County Council Band in the garden below our Buckingham-Street windows. He liked the gaiety of it. But I cannot re-

member his going to a concert or the opera, his talking about music, discussing it as an art, concerning himself with its problems. Here, indeed, their long years apart had opened between the two friends a wide gulf not easy to bridge over.

Had they grown old side by side, it might have been another story. But during the Seventies and Eighties their meetings were too rare for artists whose theories and themes led them along such different paths to keep pace with each other. Whistler never loved Fantin the less for it. Nor was Fantin's affection weakened. Shortly before Whistler's death Frederick Wedmore went to see Fantin and brought away from the visit a vivid memory of the enthusiasm with which Fantin talked of Whistler, an enthusiasm Wedmore would scarcely have invented, since he was far from sharing it. And after Whistler's death Fantin, to prove that he was not afraid, as some men are, of expressing love and gratitude, wrote the touching note of reminiscences to give to the

friend who passed it on to Joseph Pennell and myself. It is an acknowledgment of his debt to Whistler who first introduced him to England and so laid the foundation of his fame and fortune. And this, he said, he wished to make known.

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Pennell, Mrs. Elizabeth (Robins)
Whistler the friend.